

Beautiful Trouble Publishing

SIBLING SURVIVALRY

THEM MACCÁDAIN
GIRLS &
THOSE FRANCISCO
STIÚBHART BOYS

JEANIE JOHNSON & JAYHA LEIGH

SIBLING SURVIVALRY:

Them MacCadáin Girls & Those Francisco Stiùbhart Boys

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CAVEAT

This work of erotica contains adult language and sexually-explicit scenes, which are smoking hot. This book is intended only for adults, as it is defined by the laws of the country in which the purchase is made. Keep this book out of the hands of under-aged readers.

Shout Outs

As always to our Mr. Me's. And now a special message: From now on we're going to do something new with our shout outs. Besides shouting out the people who'd come break us out of foreign prison should the need arise, we're also going to start shouting out a few of our fav authors. The author we're shouting out is Shara Azod.

Besides being the woman with whom Jayha has divided up the world via authorization of a treaty overseen by Jeanie, Shara (who is tall in spirit) is a benevolent despot who possesses a wicked sense of humor. NB: you guys can totally blame this book on Shara. There we were - minding our own business - when Shara befriended us and totally got us hooked on Navy Seals. Our need has gotten so bad that we simply hang around her yahoo group <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/sharascorner/> and her website <http://www.sharaazod.com/> waiting for the next story to drop.

By the way, Jeanie just wants everyone to know that since in her mind she is the basis for Charlette Letoa (Charley) then by rights Blade (the Jarhead) belongs to her and just to insure that her rights aren't violated she's drawn up a treaty.

Shara Azod's Books:

- Thierry's Angel
- My Cherie Amour
- Cory's Salvation
- Triple Bow (with RaeLynn Blue)
- Anchor's Away- Chain of Command
- Menage a Valentine (with RaeLynn Blue)
- Touch a Four Leaf Clover (with RaeLynn Blue)
- Anchor's Away- Red Skies at Night
- Designing Berlin
- Labor of Love- One Good Man (coming August 14 to RRP)
- Deep Waters Anthology- Overboard (coming in September to RRP)
- Black Roots & Cowboy Boots Anthology- Ride of a Lifetime (coming to WCP in November)

Chapter One: *Hajime* (Begin)

Tinashe Harper-MacCadaín simply rolled her eyes as she dissed yet another one of her best friend forever's suggestions on what to do during break. They did this every holiday – argued about what to do. Inevitably Abeni would suggest something asinine and inevitably she'd shoot that shit down. She smiled thinking of the "ideas" she'd said 'fuck no' to –such as chasing tornados in the Texas Panhandle, vampire hunting in New Orleans, and visiting anybody's haunted cornfield during Halloween. *Hey, she liked corn products as much as the next southerner, but what she didn't like was being in a cornfield with people who looked like they were extras in Children of the Corn.*

Then there were the things that she'd acquiesced and done such as ... well she couldn't think of anything which is why she'd agreed to go to Scotland with Abeni. Abeni had convinced her with tales of the rugged beauty of Scotland but this was NOT what she was expecting. Sure, she expected the cool weather being that Scotland was much further north of the equator than her beloved Atlanta. Sure, she expected the miles of coastline being that it was part of an island nation. Sure, she expected the beauty, but then it was Scotland. She was all set to trek through Edinburgh, Aberdeen, or at least Inverness; she was not expecting the fucking Orkney Islands. Okay, yeah sure the fact that Abeni had reserved rooms at Balfour Castle hotel on Shapinsay Island kicked all kinds of ass, but it did not make up for yesterday's little jaunt via bike around the entire freaking East Mainland Island. And not Ducati Superbike 1098R bike but *'I'm trying to win the yellow jersey'* bike.

Orkney was an archipelago consisting of seventy islands, but of course Abeni had wanted to trek to one of the seventeen UNINHABITED islands. Being that there were only 20,000 inhabitants of the islands in the first place, visiting one of the uninhabited islands was total fucking overkill, but oh no Abeni just *had* to visit because apparently it was fun to be out of reach of help if something went awry. And being that Abeni was part of the equation, there was a damn good chance that something would go awry.

"C'mon Tinashe, we're already in the Orkneys, it wouldn't make any sense NOT to visit just for the novelty at least."

“You know, Abeni, all of your ideas suck; the only question is where on the sliding scale of suckdom your idea falls.”

“My ideas do NOT suck!”

“Bullshit. What didn’t suck was your ex-boyfriend, which is why you got rid of him,” Tinashe smirked.

“Okay, you have a point.”

“I always have a point. I told you that Dane wasn’t shit when I first met him.”

“You just hated him because he was blonde; it had nothing to do with his character.”

“Yeah it did. Any man who doesn’t eat the coochie has suspect character. And whoa and behold. Dane didn’t eat coochie, did he? But the man - and believe me, the term ‘man’ is in quote marks - ate cauliflower. That should’ve told you something was up.”

“Okay, fine. I admit that Dane was a bad idea, and since you are so against visiting one of the uninhabited islands how about going to Hellier Holm or Green Holm?”

“How about not?”

“But Puffin birds are there. Come on, Tinashe, you have to admit that rocks.”

“Will the puffin birds be deep-fried and come with a side of bleu cheese dressing?”

“Blasphemy!” Abeni shouted. “How can you say such a thing?”

“Because I hate birds. They shit everywhere and make a lot of noise,” she said in an effort to rile her sister, who was a wannabe ornithologist trapped in the mind of an economist.

“You like Big Bird.”

“And I also like chicken.”

“I am going to pray for you.”

“Okay. Can we do it from the sitting room of our lovely hotel?”

“No way. We’re already here. It’s a beautiful day.”

“And it’s a perfect chance to recover from your little idea of ‘let’s pretend we’re Rocky training to fight Ivan Drago in *Rocky IV*’ type training.”

“Exercise is good for you,” Abeni returned.

“So is rest. Even God did it. Took an entire day after making the universe.”

“You did not just compare yourself to God?” Abeni shouted.

“Of course not, but I am God’s work and I have to admit that God brought the A plus game on me,” she smiled.

“All I can say is that you should call your real estate friend Zuri because I bet that she can get you some lakefront property on the lake of fire.”

“Over-the-line, but then again you don’t know any other place, do you?” Tinashe sighed.

“Yes, I do. How about Hellier Holm and Green Holm?”

“I thought I’d already hell-no’ed those ideas.”

“Okay, I was going to save this as the big surprise but besides birds galore, there are ... wait for it ... seals there with their seal puppies.”

“Are we going to deep fry them?” Tinashe asked.

“You know what? You should ask Zuri to get you a deluxe lot with like a big ass slide because you’re going to be sliding into hell at full speed.”

“A slide? So the lake of fire is like an amusement park in your imagination?”

“I’m putting you on ignore mode,” Abeni muttered.

“Okay, since that’s the case, I’m just going to go back to the hotel,” she said and pretending to walk off knowing that it’d annoy the shit out of her sister. Hey, it might be wrong but she lived for such things. Just as she suspected, Abeni grabbed her arm ... and started whining.

“Please, please, please, please,” Abeni had whined.

“You know this is a damn shame. You have a Masters and a Doctorate from M.I.T. and you’ve resorted to whining.”

“So what? You’re about to get your doctorate from Stanford and you resort to evil. Actually, you don’t resort to evil. It’s like your first choice, which is so fitting with you being a poly sci major. What’s your specialty? Oh yeah, toppling governments.”

“This is so not helping your argument.”

“If you don’t go with me I’ll be all alone and what if I get kidnapped,” Abeni whined.

“Well then, your daddy will be mighty disappointed in you being that he trained you in hand-to-hand combat,” she’d returned.

“*Our* daddy,” Abeni said.

“Look, just because we have the same biological mother and father does NOT make us sisters,” Tinashe spat.

“Does too,” Abeni sing-songed.

“Shut. Up.”

“Okay, but I’d hate for momma to find out that you let me wander off all by myself being that I’m delicate and all.”

Tinashe looked and then she threw back her head and laughed her fucking ass off. “Yeah, you’re delicate just like aggregated diamond nanorods.”

“Diamonds might be hard but if you hit them with a hammer they shatter,” Abeni returned.

Tinashe quirked a single brow at her older sister who was exactly one inch shorter than her own 6’2” and built like a taller, more muscular version of tennis superstar Serena Williams. “And just where would you get a hammer that big? I don’t think Thor’s hammer is that big, chick.”

“You can just shut up. I am delicate in comparison to ...”

Tinashe cut her off. “In comparison to an entire fucking special ops unit of superheroes?”

“There you go. You’re just not happy until you venture off to Over-the-Fucking-Line Land (OTFLL).”

“You know why my passports stamped with so many visits from OTFLL? Because I’m always having to play special ops and go get your trifling ass!”

“Okay, you might have a point but when have you NOT had fun on a trip with me?”

“Are you kidding me?” Tossing her pack to the ground, she peeled off her Carhartt waterproof, breathable jacket. Pulling off her fleece pullover and rolling up the sleeve of her t-shirt, she pointed to a wicked-looking scar. Pulling the shirt down from her back a bit, she revealed another scar crossing her shoulder blade. Rolling up the leg of her cargo jeans, she pointed to a scar across her knee.

“Every time we’ve had “fun” she paused to make air quotes, “one of us, and on the rare occasion, both of us ends up in the ER.” They had. In fact, their medical records bore stamps from as many foreign places as did their actual passports.

“Oh, you’re never going to let that go, are you?” Abeni whined.

“Fuck no. I could almost forgive the little run-in we had with that group of guerilla fighters, the unexpected *tête-à-tête* with the shark, the unplanned mini-marathon we had to run when you accidentally incited that riot, but almost getting gored to death by a fucking rhino, so not ever freaking letting that go. If rhinos had better eyesight, our parents would’ve been sifting through rhino shit to find our remains.”

“It was a female rhino, so it was much smaller,” Abeni started.

“Which means that she was only eight hundred pounds instead of a thousand?” Tinashe spat.

Abeni continued as if she hadn’t spoken. “And rhinos are herbivores so it wouldn’t have eaten you.”

Tinashe was going to kill Abeni. Yep, straight out kill her and if not kill then definitely a light maiming at the very least. As always, thinking of that fucking rhino pissed her off. It was the one time she was worried that she

wouldn't be able to save her idiot sister. Okay, idiot with a Ph.D., but still an idiot nonetheless. *What the hell would she have done if she'd lost her sister? Who would she have kicked it with?*

"Come on, Tinashe. The Orkneys are a nature lover's wet dream."

"Well then you go and get off to it," she said as she slid back into her outerwear.

"Come on, I'll buy you..." Abeni began.

"A Ducati?"

"I was going to say lunch, but if buying you a stupid little motorcycle will get you to come, fine."

"First, never refer to a masterpiece in mechanical engineering with the adjectives 'stupid' and/or 'little'. And second, babe, when you buy the Ducati for me, I'm going to let you ride it and you will indeed come ... unlike when you were with that shithead, Dane."

"Whatever, come on."

Chapter Two: *Sen Sen So Sen* (Preemptive Attack)

She was going to fucking kill her sister. Where the hell was she? Fucking puffins, razorbills, kittiwakes, and other winged creatures every damn where. If she was back in Georgia, she would've gotten her Barrett .50 caliber sniper rifle and shot every damn last one of those things. Never mind that a rifle that powerful could put a plane or boat out of commission, what was important was that she fucking hated, loathed, abhorred birds. In fact, her favorite movie was any movie where birds met bad ends. When that pelican crashed into the window in the dentist's office in *Finding Nemo*, she cracked her up so bad that she was scared she'd laugh up her spleen.

Fuck, she hated birds. Did she mention that? Those fucking winged shits had tried to shit in her fucking hair. Luckily, she'd donned her hat. You did not fuck with a black woman's hair. Even white guys knew that, but not fucking birds. *And where the fuck was Abeni?* And how the hell did they end up on one of those nearby uninhabited islands? She was sure that she'd put her foot down and said no fucking way to Abeni's nutty ass request. It must've been Abeni's fucking puppy dog eyes otherwise she sure as hell wouldn't have done this mini triathlon just to go into yet another cave. She'd done everything except swim and since the day wasn't yet done, she wasn't sure that swimming wasn't on the agenda.

"Tina-she, come and look at this!" she heard her sister's excited voice call out to her from somewhere that was not the beautiful gardens of their castle hotel that sat on seventy private acres.

Tinashe suppressed a groan. She hated it when Abeni mispronounced her name. To this day, half her graduating class thought her first name was Tina and her middle name was the feminine singular normative pronoun '*she*.' Abeni only pronounced her name thusly when she got excited, but being that Abeni's normal state was '*bouncing off the fucking walls*', she was mostly called Tina-she instead of the exotic name with which her parents had gifted her.

"Where the hell are you?" Tinashe asked as her keen eyes scored the rocky terrain surrounding her.

She was about to yell out again when she caught sight of a multi-colored beanie that undoubtedly belonged to Abeni. While it was possible that there was another crazed nutcase rocking a beanie, only Abeni had a custom-made beanie bearing her school colors ... and fucking propellers. Even her propellers bore the evidence of her school loyalty. One propeller was Carolina blue and white, and the other was MIT red and grey. Rocking that beanie, Abeni looked like she'd just stepped from the pages of a Dr. Seuss book instead of the college professor that she was. The only thing that even hinted at Abeni's impressive IQ was her habit of singing the MIT fight song, which was a hodgepodge of mathematical terms. Despite being a political science major she easily recognized the trigonometric functions because she'd almost had a cage match with them during high school because math interfered with her quality time with her motorcycle and the open road. Abeni might be the smartest woman she knew, but she put the 'fuck' in 'unfuckingbelievable'.

Feeling a chill, she tugged her toboggan further down to cover her ears, being careful to make sure that the University of North Carolina logo was positioned just so. Though she was told that it was unusually hot, she was a southerner, and therefore, she was cold. And how could she not be? Though it was June, the average temperature in summer was a piping hot fifty-four degrees Fahrenheit. Despite the supposed heat wave, she didn't need a thermometer to verify that it was still sub sixty degrees; her nipples about to poke holes through her shirt told her that better than any thermometer could.

"Over here!" Abeni yelled.

Turning in the direction of Abeni's excited voice, she quickly located the beanie only to watch it disappear from sight once more. No matter, she now had a lock on her and as soon as she caught up with her Abeni was going to get a wedgie so intense that the tops of her underwear would be around her ears. Knowing Abeni's penchant for wearing weird ass underwear, she could only imagine the picture that that would make. She bet that the chick had some kind of superhero underwear being that she never outgrew her crush on boy's underwear or superheroes.

Tinashe was already halfway over to where her sister was when she felt a distinct shiver go up her spine that had nothing to do with the wind chill factor. With her head on a swivel, she quickly scanned the area but found nothing out of the ordinary. Still, she took notice of even the smallest things as she had to look out for her sister. Though she was allowed to threaten Abeni all she wanted, anybody or anything else that did so was going to get it ... and not in a good way. She was about to go investigate when Abeni appeared right in front of her with a big grin on her face.

"Hurry up, it's fucking awesome!" she said before grabbing Tinashe's hand and tugging her along to who only knew where.

Eòghan Francisco Stiùbhart was mid-argument with Coinneach when he spotted the dark women. Though they were bundled up almost from head to toe in spite of the heat, what he could see of them intrigued him. Sure, he'd seen dark women before, but he didn't see many women who looked like *them* in the Orkney Islands. "Who are *they*?" Eòghan asked excitedly as he watched the women that had captured his attention.

Coinneach didn't respond immediately, not that Eòghan expected him to. Though Coinneach's silence was an innate part of his makeup, it still managed to annoy him ... even after nearly two centuries and a quarter. Instead of beaming him in the head with a rock like he wanted to, he simply waited for Coinneach to remember how his vocal cords worked and speak. While Eòghan waited for Coinneach to respond he tried out their names. Uh-bee-nee and Teen-ah-shay. Those were exotic names then again from what he could see of the women, they were as exotic as their names. Tall women, they both had skin the color of frothy milk chocolate and tempting full lips.

While both women were intriguing, he found himself drawn to the one named Abeni. It was the hat ... and the smile. Wild curls spilled out from under her colorful headwear and her tempting lips were spread in a perpetual smile. Though he couldn't quite make out her eye color, he'd bet that they sparkled with adventure. And from the way the other woman's jaw was clenched when she looked at Abeni, he'd bet that this was a

commonplace thing for her. He felt a connection with the one named Abeni.

He watched as Tinashe clenched her gloved fists. For a moment he was concerned that the other woman was going to do physical harm to Abeni, but then he saw her close her eyes and do some sort of breathing thing. She still looked mad when she opened them, but at least she'd thrust her hands in her pockets. Eòghan watched as her demeanor swiftly changed. It was as if she had felt their presence. In that moment she looked decidedly dangerous. In all of his years, he'd only seen one other person bear that look: Coinneach. Wow. *Who knew that there was someone just as surly as his older brother?* The moment passed when an excited Abeni ran up to her and dragged her off chattering non-stop.

Despite his sudden fascination with the two women, Eòghan was aware that Coinneach still hadn't answered. Dragging his eyes away from where the women had disappeared to, Eòghan looked at his brother. Coinneach had adopted his customary pose. That is his arms were crossed over his chest and he was staring out to sea with his trademark scowl.

The wind was picking up as they stood on the mystical plains between the two worlds - that being the immortal and the mortal world. And though neither of them could actually feel the crispness of the earthly wind their long sable hair was caught by the fingers of air and tossed over their broad shoulders.

Eòghan and Coinneach were perfect blends of their Celtic mother, Beitidh and their Spanish-Moroccan father, Adil Fernando. Standing 6'8" and 6'10", respectively, both Eòghan and Coinneach had wide shoulders, sturdy builds, and glossy manes of hair. Their piercing eyes resembled the color-shift paint jobs that decorated automobiles at car shows. That is, they seemed to shift from blue to purple to green to gold depending upon the angle one was at. Their eye color combined with their tanned skin color gave them an exotic look, which many, many a female appreciated. In fact, the Francisco Stiùbhart brothers could best be described as a walking advertisement for wet dreams.

The brothers had been irresistible to all of the female persuasion and they'd enjoyed that freedom ... immensely ... until the fateful night of the sailing of the ship, *Scotia*. Despite the fact that the Francisco brothers came to Scottish soil when the smaller but quicker 'race ships' of the English Fleet captained by pirates such as Sir Francis Drake (an official privateer who used to go by the name Francisco Draque before he became licensed by the British monarchy) scattered the galleons of the mighty Spanish Armada. Some of the boats went to Scandinavian countries. One unfortunate crew shipwrecked upon *Eileann nan Geansaidh* (Fair Isle), which was midway between Shetland and Orkney Islands, where the majority of the crewmen met bad ends. A more fortunate vessel shipwrecked upon Westray. His father and uncle had landed upon Westray and then quickly made their way to one of the most sparsely-populated isles where they'd been left in relative peace.

Eòghan, who'd barely out of his teenage years had taken it into his head that he was going to sail with their Uncle, one of the finest sailor's he knew. Enjoying the delights of the tavern owner's two daughters Coinneach had literally been dragged from the bed by his uncle's runner who'd hurriedly informed him of Eòghan's imminent travels. Cussing the whole way, Coinneach had arrived just in time; however he hadn't been able to talk his brother out of sailing. So being, he joined the crew.

It was a difficult voyage but when their Uncle had successfully sailed them around Chile's Cape Horn towards Oceana instead of having to go the route of most sailors, that is sailing three-quarters of Africa and past Oceania, everyone, including the ship's captain, became well-acquainted with the sailing prowess of Ra'd Gaspar Francisco. After many grueling months at sea, *Scotia* had berthed in Tahiti. For a while, it had been good. Beautiful weather, good food and drink, combined with beautiful women were always good things to sailors. But after a while, the crew had had their fill of rum, women and adventure and longed to return home to unique beauty of Scotland. It's difficult for a person to stay away from the place

that they call home, even more so for a Scots ... but then Captain Nilsson wasn't Scots; he was an Englishman living in Scotland.

The good captain had decided that he wasn't ready to return home, which was unfortunate for him because the crew had visited him late at night and given him an ultimatum. He could remain here or forfeit his share of the spoils including his boat or he could be ready to sail by the end of the sennight. The good captain had chosen to return home, however he made it clear that he wasn't leaving without Nanihi, the beautiful maiden with which he'd fallen in love. The man already had a wife, as did many of the crewmen, but none other than the Captain planned on bringing women with them. Coinneach was unsure what the Captain planned to do with the Tahitian beauty but he knew that whatever it was, it couldn't be good. It was assured that she couldn't return to Scotland with them. Captain Nilsson may be an Englishman of Norwegian descent but his wife was pure Scots and she'd drag him off to a cliff and toss him over it if he tried to blatantly cuckold her like that.

It was one thing to fall for a beautiful woman; it was a completely different thing to succumb to the charms of another woman when one already had a wife. Coinneach already disliked Captain Nilsson, and this was simply one more of the things that made the man unforgivably weak in his eyes. Of course he'd grown up watching his father look at his mother as if she was the only woman in the world. The whole of femininity could parade naked through his parent's bedroom and Adil Fernando wouldn't see anyone else but Beitidh.

He'd hated the Captain, still he did not intend to mutiny. And regardless of how adventurous his brother was, he knew that neither he nor his Uncle would participate in a mutiny. They might, however rough him up a bit. Despite not planning to mutiny, Coinneach did however intend to tell the beautiful Tahitian woman that the Captain already had a wife.

He'd told her but obviously the Captain had lied to Nanihi because the beautiful woman boarded the *Scotia* along with the crew. Something in Coinneach rankled at the Captain's behavior, but there was nothing that he, his Uncle or brother could do about it. So they'd boarded the ship and went about his duties never expecting what would come next. They'd gone back

around the long way, via sailing around Africa's Cape of Good Hope. Having the master seamen, Ra'd Gaspar Francisco on board; the captain had chosen to remain in his quarters with his beautiful mistress for the majority of the voyage. The closer they got to Scotland, the more they saw of their Captain. From the glimpses of the Captain, it was clear that the man was agitated. One night, the reality of what he'd done must've hit him for he'd dragged Nanihi to the bow of the ship and tried to toss her overboard. Nanihi might've been duped by the Captain, but the lass had spirit ... and some deadly fists.

Having been assigned to perpetual shit detail along with his brother, they were on night watch, and therefore were present when the Captain had tried to do his dirty business. The Captain's ignorance was on obvious display. The man actually thought that Nanihi would go to her death quietly.

"Die with some dignity," the Captain had whined.

"I intend to do just that," she'd returned as she kicked the Captain in the jaw. Her intentions were clear: she knew that she'd probably be tossed overboard, but she fully intended to take the Captain with her.

Nanihi was straight giving the Captain what was probably more hell than he'd ever seen. It was a certainty that the hell she raised was more hell than he'd ever seen. The ruckus had been phenomenal. Coinneach hadn't liked or disliked her, but in that moment, he couldn't help but respect Nanihi. Her beauty might be unmatched by any woman he'd seen, but her courage, her spirit surpassed even her beauty.

The obligatory brawl broke out that encompassed the whole of the ship. Of course, none of the Francisco men sided with the Captain. It would've been over quickly if the other crewmen had the same feelings of fairness, but the majority of them simply didn't want the problems that would plague them all if the woman were to debark in Scotland with them. A true beauty, Coinneach could truthfully say that none in the whole of their homeland could come anywhere close to equaling Nanihi's beauty. Not only would that rankle the women there, it would cause an uproar amongst the wives of

the crewmen. The wives would all want an accounting of what their husband's had done during their lengthy absence.

Just as the brouhaha shined light on Nanihi's courage; it also served to demonstrate the Captain's lack of wit and his arrogance. It was obvious that the Captain had thought that none would defy him. While some of the crew did indeed jump to his aid, an equal number did not. When it was over, the Captain along with sixteen crewmen had sound thrashings and were locked in the brig but not before he and Eòghan were thrown overboard and carried out of sight of the ship.

Because they'd left Oceania at the beginning of autumn, they were close to the Africa somewhere near the Equator when winter arrived. They were in a good place still the middle of the Atlantic Ocean was not the place to be pushed overboard. It was deep, dark and dangerous. Despite their strength, their swimming skill, and their youth, they were no match for the Atlantic. They fought for a long while, but drowning was inevitable. He remembered hugging his brother that last time and going under yet another crushing wave.

And then they'd both been spared ... for a price. Out of no where a man and woman had appeared. They had the same eyes as their mother, which is why they'd trusted them. They'd made a deal with them and thus Coinneach and Eòghan had found themselves back in their Orkney Islands but for one tiny fact: they were immortal ... kind of, somewhat, with the long life but none of the cool ass perks of immortality. That had been two hundred twenty five years ago.

A lot had happened in those years. First and foremost, their actions had helped save Nanihi. After giving the Captain a good beating, their Uncle had commandeered the ship and taken the crew home. Their Uncle had made plans to return Nanihi to her homeland, but somewhere along the way, Ra'd had fallen for Nanihi. Instead of returning the beautiful, feisty woman to Tahiti, Ra'd made her his ship's master and they spent the majority of their time sailing the world. In fact, they'd become integral to stealing slaves off of cotton, indigo, sugar cane, rice, and tobacco plantations in the American south and Brazil. His Uncle Ra'd and his Aunt

Nanihi had become some of the greatest and most-feared pirates in seafaring history.

They had discovered that their ancestors had tricked them so that they might return to their philandering ways with the human women and thus Coinneach and Eòghan were to remain in their stead. It seemed that spending time stuck between the mortal and immortal realms had taught their ancestors nothing. Then again, their ancestors hadn't spent as much time in immortal form as they had. It would be an understatement to say that Coinneach was in a full of rage at the trickery, but Eòghan, true to his nature, had seen the brightness in a hopeless situation.

For one week a month, the brothers were able to walk the land as men and enjoy the perks of humanity, namely being able to do more than see and hear. During that time they had access to the entire smorgasbord of human senses. That is, they could taste, touch and smell. More importantly, others could see, touch, and smell them. However when the dawn came on the seventh day so did the mists that would render them invisible to humans. That week was due to start in a few hours.

What should be a happy time was the time that Eòghan referred to as Coinneach's bout of PMS. Emitting a humorless laugh, Coinneach had to admit that Eòghan's analogy was right on. Though he didn't experience bloating, he did crave chocolate and according to Eòghan his usual attitude, which he'd rated 'needs improvement' went from barely tolerable to downright hateful. It wasn't that Coinneach didn't look forward to being human; it was that he didn't like getting his hope up only to be dashed.

He wasn't the bastard that Eòghan thought he was. He was simply tired of wanting what he couldn't have. Who would believe that the arrogant Coinneach Francisco Stiùbhart didn't wish for wealth or power but a happily ever after? Inconceivable but nonetheless true. He'd been an arrogant bastard in his youth, but when you're young you live under the mistaken impression that you're invincible. Pulling himself from his increasingly morose thoughts, he responded to Eòghan's question. *Who were they?* He didn't know who they were but he didn't want them here. It

wasn't simply because their presence disturbed him; it was because he found himself wanting to be disturbed by the intriguing women.

"I don't know who they are, brother, but they're not welcome," Coinneach finally answered.

"But—," Eòghan began to argue but Coinneach was already striding in the direction that the dark beauties had disappeared, trying valiantly to ignore the flutter in his heart and the stirring of his groin.

"Coinneach!" He heard Eòghan yell. He didn't stop or do anything to acknowledge his brother. The centuries had taught him that Eòghan was most likely rolling his eyes and silently cussing up a blue streak. Their extended time together had also taught him that regardless of how Eòghan felt about Coinneach's manners or lack thereof, that he'd follow him hoping that he could prevent him from scaring off the two beautiful women.

Tinashe got that feeling again – like she was being watched. She didn't like that feeling especially when she couldn't find the reason for it. Then again being in a cave where the only entrance was off of a fucking cliff face didn't help. Of course Abeni was bouncing off the walls she was so excited – not literally but fucking close enough.

"Hey, do you know why there are so many caves on this island?" Abeni asked excitedly.

"Because there are lots of bats?" She'd answered dryly knowing that her lack of excitement would irk Abeni, which is exactly why she did it.

"I'm not talking to you anymore," Abeni huffed and pressed on.

Tinashe couldn't help but smile. The brochure had informed them that the presence of Orkney Island's numerous narrow channels (geos) and caves were the result of the erosion of the island's soft sandstone rock. The brochure had also gone on to describe the numerous caves. She hadn't read the entire tour brochure but the term 'spooky' had gotten her attention, especially as it was so close to the term 'birds.' *Did she mention that she hated fucking birds?* Nesting birds filled some caves while others ranged from spooky to cathedral-like.

They'd already gone traipsing in and out of numerous caves. So far there were no birds, therefore no bird fatalities. The cave that they were currently in was thankfully bird-free, but the deeper they got into it, the weirder the aura. Though she wasn't an expert spelunker or anything, the cave was much larger than she would've expected, especially after that tight ass entrance. You almost needed to be a contortionist to get in. Tinashe hadn't wanted to go on Abeni's impromptu cave exploration or that impromptu rock climb, but damn if this cave almost made it worth it. Not only did the cave seem to become more spacious with each step; it grew more beautiful. So caught up in the beauty of the cave and keeping an eye on Abeni, the sudden vision of a man took her off guard. The man was undoubtedly one of the most handsome men she'd ever seen. His arresting face was dominated by a fierce scowl. Before she could consider her next move the vision disappeared.

"Is this place haunted?" she asked her sister.

Abeni paused in her excitement and looked back at her.

"I don't know – it didn't say anything on the brochure."

Rolling her eyes, Tinashe grabbed Abeni's hand to prevent her from walking deeper into the cave. While it was true that the smallness of the islands limited the size of the caves, it wasn't unusual for caves to consist of miles upon miles of passageways. Mammoth Cave in Kentucky had somewhere around three hundred miles of passageways. Though she was sure that this cave had no where near that amount, she didn't relish the idea of being trapped in a cave with something that didn't want them there. She might be a political science major but Tinashe didn't for one moment think that human knowledge came close to unlocking most of the world's magic. And if there was one place full of magic, it was Scotland.

"We could be trespassing on holy land or some kind of ancient burial ground," Tinashe said casually.

She watched Abeni shake her head before answering. "Nah, we would've felt it."

Abeni might be crazy but she was no fool and like her, Abeni believed that there was truth in many of the urban legends. As nuts as some of the things she did were, Abeni would never violate another's sacred place. Tinashe thought it might be a good time to mention the dude she'd seen but despite the hold she had on her hand, Abeni was already dragging her deeper into the cave. She was about to snatch her sister back but then Abeni suddenly stopped causing her to crash into her back. And though she was an inch taller than Abeni's 6'1", Abeni's stupid ass hat made her taller. Before she even had time to properly mush her in the back of the head, Abeni stepped to the side allowing her to see the chamber. Tinashe forgot all about the insult that she was about to hurl instead opting for the only thing that she could say under the circumstances. "OHHHHHHHHHHH!"

"I know right? It reminds me of the Sistine Chapel," Abeni said with a grin.

"The Sistine Chapel wishes it could be this," she said as she looked at the variegated hues that decorated the rock face. There were deep browns intermingled with metallic greys, reds, indigos, and strains of black. There were also colors she couldn't name and hues she'd never before seen. "On the first day, God created earth and what a fantastic job that was. Regardless of what humanity designs, nothing ever comes close to the natural wonders," Tinashe breathed as her eyes worked overtime to take in the wonder and splendor of the room.

"While it's not as big as the chamber in Carlsbad, this is plenty good room. We could have like a secret lab in that corner and...", Abeni droned on as she walked further around the cavernous chamber.

Tinashe simply shook her head and watched as Abeni made plans for a place where she definitely wouldn't be living. Her sister might crush on the cave, but like her, Abeni didn't like cold weather for long. Plus, regardless of how beautiful it was, the fact remained that it was still a freaking cave. Reluctantly dragging her eyes from the cave's natural beauty, she ran to catch up with Abeni who despite warnings was walking further away making plans that most likely included numerous elements of danger. For a lunatic, Abeni sure could move fast. Already, she'd made her way through the massive chamber and was currently heading around the corner – a

corner where all kinds of danger could be lurking. She still hadn't forgotten about her vision of the man.

She rounded the corner just in time to see Abeni gliding her hands reverently over a strangely-shaped rock wall. The colors combined with the shape brought to mind Caribbean waters, thunderstorms, and the greens at Augusta ... all at once. If she had to put a name on it, she'd say it was a natural representation of Scotia. This bend wasn't more beautiful than the chamber that it branched off from; it was simply another type of beauty. Tinashe looked on in awe. She didn't touch, but Abeni never stopped touching. It was clear that Abeni was fascinated with the wall and being the younger sister it was her duty to tease her about it.

"So are you going to take that section of rock out to dinner?"

"What are you talking about?" Abeni asked without taking either or hands or eyes off of the rock section.

"I mean you're practically feeling it up. Under the circumstances I think you're obligated to at least buy it dinner before you get the goods," she teased.

"You are so wrong for that," Abeni laughed. "But there's something about it. It's just so beautiful. After walking in here I know how beautiful looks, and now I know how beautiful feels."

Grabbing her hand, Abeni carefully placed her fingertips over the rock face.

"Doesn't it feel ... alive. It's like this wall is pulsing with life."

"You're right. Each crevice of the rock is like a line on a human face or the wrinkles on our hands," Tinashe whispered.

Abeni nodded enthusiastically. "Maybe one day we'll be worthy of hearing the earth's story. A lot has happened since God made the earth on that first day," she said as she continued to caress the wall. Tinashe watched as Abeni came to a particularly smooth section. Abeni stepped back and tilted her head to one side and then the other before closing her eyes and pressing the flat of her hand against the slightly raised rock that

was waist high. Tinashe didn't even bother to ask her what she was doing because it was clear that Abeni was in her element. Abeni might be an economist, but that chick was like a cross between Indiana Jones and Tombrader, except she was better-looking than them both and didn't take any souvenirs from her adventures. No, Abeni was simply content to have the experience of the adventure itself.

Tinashe didn't say anything; she simply sat back and watched. Her gut told her that they were on the cusp of something big. She kept her mouth shut but she stepped closer to Abeni and kept her eyes peeled. When the rock moved and showed another room, though her heartbeat accelerated, she said nothing. She simply stayed close to Abeni's six and followed her to ensure her safety. There was no point in telling Abeni to stop because yeah, that was like telling the sun to stop shining. Tinashe was silent right until she walked into the chamber and took in its contents.

"This so wasn't listed in the brochure," Abeni said.

"Is that what I think it is?" Tinashe asked her sister as she eyed the black rectangle. Seeing Abeni throw a grin over her shoulder, she moved deeper into the chamber and picked up the touch screen universal remote. She pressed a few buttons and watched as a ten foot screen dropped down and ESPN came on. Tinashe felt a tear come to her eye as she watched the screen fill up with images of Venus and Serena Williams at Wimbledon. Tennis was her favorite sport – that is after football. Football was automatically her favorite sport being that she was southern. The screen was beautiful and the sound was simply amazing. She didn't know the wheres or hows this all worked especially since she didn't see the first electrical outlet, but as she sank onto the plush leather chair she couldn't bring herself to care.

"You made fun of me feeling up the rock wall, but at the way you're staring at that television, I think I see a shotgun wedding in your future because I'm sure that you got that television pregnant with the way you're carrying on with it," Abeni chuckled.

“Whatever, if the big screen and I could procreate, I’d have to rethink you being their god mommy being that you’re so mean to me and all,” she said before she went back to watching the television.

Though her eyes were glued to the screen for the most part, she kept Abeni in her peripheral vision. Abeni was still wandering around the spacious room that was about the size of their den. She might be infatuated with the television but she wasn’t about to let Abeni wander too far from her. Tinashe felt a shiver course through her, which reminded her of her earlier vision. Before she could issue a caveat to Abeni, the room became markedly cooler. She didn’t wait for anything to pop off; she simply jumped out of the seat and rushed over to Abeni. Jumping in front of Abeni, she used her hips to back her into the wall then used her twenty pound weight advantage to hold her in place.

“If I say run, you haul ass, no questions asked,” she ordered as she whipped out a dagger and placed it into her sister’s hand.

“But I want to see the rest of the cave,” Abeni started.

“I mean it Abeni,” she said as she pulled out her own dagger. She’d rather have some heavier artillery but since she couldn’t exactly bring her personal arsenal with her on vacation she had to make do with what was available.

“Fine, gosh,” Abeni whined. “But I wasn’t going to take anything.”

“You never do, but that’s not the point. I don’t want you hurt and I have a feeling.”

“Oh,” Abeni said. Though her bottom lip was still poked out, Tinashe noticed that she changed her grip on the dagger. The excitement in her eyes was replaced with the eagle-eyed sharpness of the genius that lurked within her so she knew that Abeni would do what she said ... at least for the next few minutes.

She was set to take the first step when she noticed the man standing next to the screen. He looked similar to the scowling man that she’d seen earlier, except he had a slightly leaner build and waist-length hair. He also had on a conquistador hat for some reason. Briefly, she wondered if this

too was a vision, but before she could give it further thought, Abeni's excited shout interrupted her thoughts.

"Holy shit!" Abeni exclaimed from behind Tinashe's back.

Okay, so it wasn't a vision this time.

"Eloquent," the dude she saw in her first vision commented.

She watched as the leaner man mushed the scowling man in the back of the head, just like she did to Abeni whenever she did something inappropriate, which was most of the time. Though the situation still reeked of danger, she couldn't help but smile at the scene before her. They were like a male version of her and Abeni right down to the ridiculous head gear.

"Don't be such an ass," the leaner of the two men said with a glare at his companion.

"Hey, they're the ones invading our home and they're the ones with the weapons," the asshole one complained.

"Uh, they're smaller than us and they're female, brother," Conquistador-hat-wearing one said as he elbowed him in the ribs before turning a wide grin on Abeni and Tinashe.

"Welcome to Stiùbhart Castle ladies," he said as he gifted them with a devastating smile.

Tinashe and Abeni responded to his welcome quite differently.

"Well being that this is a 'castle'," Tinashe made air quotes, "do you plan on throwing us in the dungeon or off of the battlements?"

"Hey, your hat is so cool!" Abeni said as she pointed at the conquistador hat the leaner man wore.

"Of course we'd never harm two such beautiful creatures as you ladies," Conquistador-hat-wearing dude replied before turning to Abeni and addressing her comments.

"Thank you," he smiled at Abeni. "And I admire your hat also."

Great, Tinashe thought. Just fucking great, there was the male equivalent of Abeni. Though Abeni was trying her best to get out from behind her, she was going to have to wait on meeting her new best friend until after Tinashe got some answers. “I hate to interrupt this little love fest, but now that we have your word on not killing us and all, can we finish looking at the batcave or are you going to force us to leave at sword point?”

Coinneach had been watching the ladies since he'd first spotted them on the beach. At first, he was going to scare them off despite his little brother's objections, but he'd been so perplexed by their actions that he'd forgotten to get to the scaring of them although he had the distinct impression that the woman sans the ridiculous hat, had seen him. The fetching women were nothing like any anything that he'd ever encountered. Insane Fetching Woman and Prickly Fetching Woman as he'd dubbed them obviously didn't live by the same set of rules as most humans, which was the problem.

His original intent had been to scare them but Eòghan had taken a liking to them and had decided that they were too delicate to warrant such a thing. Coinneach scoffed at his brother's assessment, especially considering the physical exertion that they had to expend to get to the cave. Still, he could do no more than scoff. Though he kept himself cloaked from the women, despite the fact that they wouldn't be able to see them for a few hours, the scowl that Eòghan threw him put Coinneach on notice that he'd have a fight on his hands if he attempted to scare these women. Scowling harder, he simply contented himself with watching them ... for the time being. The two women may seem harmless, but events two hundred twenty five years ago in the cold, unforgiving Atlantic had taught him never to underestimate anyone ... even those who offered to help them.

Why couldn't they simply be like most humans and visit the touristy places? Or even one of the other sixteen uninhabited islands of Orkney? Why did they have to come here – to *their* island? When they entered their cavern, Coinneach and Eòghan had both stilled. Few ever found the cave entrance and the few who did never wandered more than a few feet in as

the cramped entrance was a not only a tight fit but quite plain unlike the majority of the caves that dotted the Islands. Something in him alerted him to the fact that despite the spells on the cave and the plainness that camouflaged its beauty, the two women wouldn't be content with simply looking at the surface. They were sure to discover the cave's secrets, which meant that they'd surely discover their sanctuary.

An hour later, Coinneach found himself tuning into them like they were the top-rated television program. Their banter intrigued him so much so that he found himself reluctantly softening his hate towards them ... well not so much the prickly one. Prickly Fetching Woman reminded him of someone but he couldn't put his finger on it. Insane Fetching Woman on the other hand kind of grew on him. In fact, she'd made him actually smile. She reminded him of Eòghan with her sense of adventure and quick smiles and even quicker laughter ... and he noticed that he wasn't the only one noticing. Though Eòghan looked at both women, Coinneach noticed that he couldn't keep his eyes off of Insane Fetching Woman. Eòghan had an easygoing manner but Coinneach couldn't recall a time when his brother had been this relaxed. It was clear that Insane Fetching Woman and his brother were two peas in the proverbial pod. His brother might simply think that she would be a great companion to spend this week with, but Coinneach knew better. This woman belonged with his brother and he was going to do everything in his power to throw them together. Eòghan might be a pest of the highest order, but he was his little brother and he loved him and wanted to see him happy ... even if it meant that he'd be alone for three-quarters of the year.

If Eòghan had liked the women before, their reaction to the chamber and the passageway that led to their living quarters sealed it. The two women treated their home like it was a temple. And considering the way that people treated temples nowadays their reactions humbled them. So stunned were they by their reaction that they'd not been able to prevent them from venturing further into their abode. Prickly Fetching Woman look liked she wanted to propose to his television while Insane Fetching Woman was busy trying to check out the rest of the cave. It was clear that she had an explorer's heart. Unlike explorers of legend she didn't want the gold;

she simply wanted the journey. Prickly Fetching Woman on the other hand was well, too surly for his tastes ... regardless of how hard she made him.

Recalling her remark about bats and caves, he felt the need to clarify just one of many points he was sure he'd need to clarify with Prickly Fetching Woman.

"There are no bats here," Coinneach said with a curl of his top lip.

"Coinneach," Eòghan practically growled a warning.

Though Eòghan spoke softly and he still had that smile plastered on his face, Coinneach knew that Eòghan was warning him to back off. Coinneach was normally the epitome of a gentleman towards women, but something about the saner of the two women challenged his equilibrium. He didn't like that ... at all. Something about her said that she wasn't like any woman he'd ever encountered. And he'd encountered multitudes of women in his long life.

Like the woman beside her, she had an interesting face. And while the one wearing the ridiculous hat had an ever-present smile that reached her amber-flecked green eyes, the taller one's full lips were stretched into a scowl and her amber-flecked green eyes flashed warnings. He could only guess at the shape of their bodies being that they had so many clothes on.

Coinneach didn't say any more ... to anyone. There was no need for Eòghan was seeing to their comfort. Despite the weapons in both their hands and despite Prickly Fetching Woman damn near pinning Insane Fetching Woman to the wall, Eòghan was already chatting them up and coaxing them to sit on the opulent sofa he'd insisted on orbing into their home.

Every few years, his brother insisted on outfitting their home with the top of the line products. Other than insisting that the orange and red shag carpet go, Coinneach let Eòghan have a free hand when it came to their humble abode ... as if he had much choice. An addict to interior design shows, Eòghan had done a bang-up job with their place. It was luxurious, yet both functional and comfortable. He may not watch Home and Garden Television, but he knew the lingo ... especially since Eòghan insisted upon

throwing it into everyday conversation. When you spent three of every four weeks pretty much without form, you had time to talk about bullshit like thread counts, warm versus cool tones and the like.

He had to admit that he enjoyed their home. Eòghan may have a streak of craziness coursing through his veins but everything he'd selected played upon all of their senses. Humans often took their humanity for granted, but neither he nor his brother would ever make that mistake again. Closing his eyes he thought about the layout of their home. The seats in the living room hugged you. They were so comfortable that the beds had to compete with them for their patronage. Many a night, both he and his brother had fallen asleep on the sofas and felt none the worse for wear when they awoke. The rest of their home was just as comfortable from their kitchen which was updated with every gadget imaginable, to their bathrooms, which could easily compete with the most exclusive spas to their beautifully-appointed dining room was intimate, yet it was roomy enough to comfortably sit the four of them ... not that he would be inviting them to dinner. And then there were the bedrooms themselves. The king-sized beds were fitted with the top of the line luxury mattresses, pillows and the highest-thread count sheets ... sheets that would make a fine wrapping for the milky, tea-colored skin of Prickly Fetching Woman. *Whoa! Hit the brakes. Where in the hell did that come from?* He couldn't stand that woman.

Already, he'd dismissed her from his thoughts. Okay, maybe not so much, but it was only because he had to keep an eye on her. Glancing at her, he noticed that though he hadn't been looking at her, she apparently hadn't taken her warning glare off of him. Her look clearly challenged him to try something. As if. He wouldn't dare try anything with Insane Fetching Woman because well, she was Eòghan's destiny.

He definitely wouldn't try anything with Prickly Fetching Woman because damn she was one surly woman. Though her scowl softened when she looked at Insane Fetching Woman, he wasn't sure that counted as a smile. Then again, considering the look on her visage when she looked at him, it just might be. The woman looked as if she wanted to end him. No, he definitely wouldn't be making any moves on her ... or any other woman

during this seven day reprieve. Nope, he'd be busy insuring that Insane Fetching Woman spent every moment with Eòghan. If being in the vicinity of Prickly Fetching Woman was the price to pay for his brother's happiness so be it, but dammit those two had better name one of their kids after him.

Shaking his head he looked away from Prickly Fetching Woman. He metaphorically patted himself on the back for not visibly shivering like he wanted to. She unnerved him. Her strange green eyes with the gold flecks ensnared him. Her scent called to him, invited him to dip his head into the space where her neck met her shoulder and inhale. Feeling his body react to that scenario, he quickly pulled up from those fantasies. Shaking his head, he focused on his brother and the woman that was destined to be his future sister-in-law.

"Hi, I'm Abeni and that's my sister Tinashe," Insane Fetching Woman began as she finally wriggled out from behind the scowling woman's back.

Fuck, they were sisters? Please, no. He didn't mind Insane Fetching Woman, but no way in hell did he want Prickly Fetching Woman in his family. Maybe, just maybe Insane Fetching Woman meant that they were sisters in theory, like sorority sisters or something. Please don't let them be related.

Since he couldn't see much of their bodies, he zeroed in on their faces. Now that he knew their names he couldn't very well call them Insane and Prickly. Abeni and Tinashe were of similar heights and shared a similar skin tone, but those were the only similarities. Whereas Abeni's green and gold colored eyes reminded him of the *terra firma* of Scotia, Tinashe's greenish-colored eyes reminded him of the seas that surrounded it. Abeni also had a riot of caramel-colored curls sticking out from under her ridiculous hat while he could only guess at what Tinashe had under her cap. Both had full lips but the difference might as well have been night and day for Abeni perpetually smiled looking like she should model lipstick, while Tinashe looked like she should model a dental guard that prevented teeth grinding.

Apparently, conversation had taken place while he was pleading with the universe to undo whatever it was that made those two women related.

"Who're you two?" Abeni asked as she stuck her dagger into the pocket of her cargo jeans and held out her hand to his brother. It didn't escape him that although she included both of them in her infectious smile, she reached out for Eòghan's hand.

Coinneach watched as his little brother automatically reached out to accept Abeni's hand, in spite of the fact that they were not yet completely in the mortal realm. He wondered how Eòghan would explain the small fact that they couldn't touch them for a few more hours. It was a question that he'd never find out the answer to because not only was Abeni able to shake hands with his brother, she stepped up closer and stroked his hair.

"Ooh, pretty hair," she said as she smiled up at him.

Though Eòghan hid his surprise well, Coinneach knew that his brother was just as taken aback at the fact that Abeni could touch him and at the unabashed way in which Abeni greeted them. But since Eòghan was the outgoing brother, he simply rolled with it and was knee deep in conversation with Abeni before he knew it. He wondered if Eòghan even realized that he kept his body between Coinneach and Abeni. Yep, this one was definitely Eòghan's mate.

"I am Eòghan and this is my brother, Coinneach."

"Hey. Y'all are cute," Abeni smiled at him as she kept her hand in his.

Both he and Eòghan were stunned. It wasn't that the woman could see them - well okay, that fact did stun them somewhat, but some people were sensitive to things.

"Abeni," Tinashe spoke warningly as she took a step towards her gregarious sister.

Abeni looked over her shoulder at her sister and answered but she didn't let go of Eòghan's hand.

"What Tina-she?"

Coinneach watched in amusement as Tinashe's scowl deepened. Flicking him a look of suspicion, she came to stand beside her sister.

"Be careful. They're ghosts," Tinashe said quietly.

"Well don't you have a vial of Holy water?" Abeni grouched.

"Never travel without it, *chica*, but that's not the point. Tread lightly," Tinashe warned.

While Coinneach picked his jaw up off of the floor, Eòghan jumped in to explain.

"Actually, we're not ghosts. A little over two centuries ago we were tricked..."

"Actually, we were cursed," Coinneach grumbled. "I'll be sure to be wary of beings pretending to help ... even if those beings have intriguing eyes."

"How long are you going to be bitter, Coinneach?" Eòghan asked.

"Until it's over," he answered.

"Wow, you're like that dude on the movie, *The Princess Bride*," Abeni said. "You know the one that is seeking revenge for his father."

"Except we're better-looking, and better-dressed, although there was a time when we wore ruffled shirts and pantaloons," Eòghan sighed. "I am so ashamed, but I assure you that just because I am a recovering bad dresser, I have not reverted to my old ways."

"Eòghan," Coinneach's warning broke into Abeni's laughter, which had permeated the cavern.

Coinneach didn't realize he was using the exact same tone with Eòghan that Tinashe used with Abeni. It wasn't until both Abeni and Eòghan rolled their eyes in tandem that he realized how they both saw him.

"Why were you cursed?" Abeni asked Eòghan interestedly.

What happened next was comical. Everyone in the cave answered her inquiry ... or at least attempted to.

"None of your business—," Coinneach started.

"Well what happened was—," Eòghan said.

"Abeni!" Tinashe scolded.

Eòghan turned to glare at Coinneach, Abeni turned a glare on Tinashe who was giving her sister a 'you just wait until we get home' look.

"I was just asking," Abeni said with pout that she directed at her sister.

"Look, obviously we're encroaching on y'all's humble batcave—," Tinashe began.

"I have already informed you there are no bats here," Coinneach forcefully interrupted Tinashe's comment.

Instead of getting angry, she ignored him and continued.

"And I understand that y'all probably didn't expect us so we'll just take our leave and y'all can go on doing whatever the hell it is you do."

Coinneach watched as Abeni gave Tinashe the identical puppy dog look that Eòghan gave him. And he watched as Tinashe braced herself against it and dragged Abeni to the exit.

"Aye, you do that," Coinneach finally commented as the two women left.

"Isn't being a bitter immortal getting tiresome, Coinneach?" Eòghan asked.

Instead of waiting for an answer he evaporated into thin air leaving Coinneach alone. Dropping heavily onto the plush sofa, Coinneach realized just how alone he was, and how alone he was. But for once, it wasn't his own loneliness that beat at him; it was Eòghan's. Damn, he really was a bastard. Tomorrow, when he stepped fully into the mortal world, he'd do all within his power to help his brother get his mate. Until that time, he'd remain in their cave and ignore his body's fierce demands for Tinashe. His desire for Tinashe was simply going to be another fantasy that went unfulfilled for Tinashe was not only a little surly for his tastes; she'd never loosened her hold on the dagger. And though he was immortal most of the time, when he was in the mortal realm, a dagger could certainly do grievous bodily harm. He'd be willing to bet a dagger in her hands would do death.

"I can't believe you actually tramped onto sacred ground like that. Nanny Harper would go insane that you did such a stupid thing!" Tinashe groused.

Abeni wanted to push her sister off of the cliff and were it not for the tongue-lashing she'd get from her momma about murdering her sister she would have. Dammit, four hours later and Tinashe was still bitching at her about whatever. Sighing, she tuned out her sister and thought about their encounter with the two ghosts. That Eòghan was a cutie. He looked like he should be doing shampoo commercials ... and he had a voice that should be heating up 1-900 lines. And then there was that body. Though he wore jeans and t-shirt, damn, he wore that shit well. Eòghan wore clothes like the sky wore the color Carolina blue and blood that had hit the air wore the color MIT red. *Mmm, mmm, mmm.*

Eòghan was hot and his brother Coinneach wasn't hard to look at either. Damn, their momma sure knew how to make some babies.

And speaking of babies, she wouldn't turn down an invitation to practice making babies with Eòghan, not that a man that looked like him would be bowled over by her. Still, if she couldn't fuck him into the ground, she could hang out with him and drool over him in her mind. He had a great sense of humor and he had an air of adventure about him ... and fineness. She bet they'd have all kinds of fun trekking over Scotland. But before she could make plans to have her next great adventure, she had to ditch his surly ass brother. Damn, Coinneach was like a male version of Tinashe. *Hold the phone.* Abeni couldn't help the grin that spread over her face as she had the proverbial light bulb moment. She should get Tinashe and Coinneach to hang out, thus leaving her and Eòghan plenty of time to have fun.

Tabling her pledge to not talk to Tinashe, she stopped suddenly causing Tinashe to damn near yank her shoulder out of the socket. With a quick *'are you okay?'* Tinashe simply rearranged her hold on her hand and continued her lecture as she dragged her past the startled hotel staff and up the stairs to their rooms. Instead of dropping her off at her own room,

Tinashe simply dragged her into hers, which was good since that's where she'd wanted to go anyway.

Abeni interrupted the next installment of Tinashe's lecture with a well-placed question. "Don't you think Coinneach is hot?"

"Are you truly insane or are you just acting out? Plus he's a ghost," Tinashe spat.

Though Tinashe was clearly angry, Abeni noticed that she studiously avoided answering the question. Abeni was piqued and as she set her pack down and peeled herself out of her multiple layers of clothes, she studied her younger sister. Tinashe wouldn't look at her. Instead she made a big task out of putting her things away neatly into her suitcase. That could only mean one thing.

"You do think he's hot! I knew it!" Abeni said on a squeal of laughter. Tinashe threw the t-shirt she'd been folding at Abeni but she kept laughing.

"I do not! He's a rude, arrogant, surly motherfucker that obviously needs to live in a cave because no one wants to deal with his ass," Tinashe spat.

Abeni didn't even bother listening to her sister's denials. She simply smiled at her and happily bounced on her sister's bed grinning her ass off. Tinashe was trying her hardest to disguise her desire amongst her disgust, but it didn't work. Oh, it would've worked on anyone else. Then again, anyone else would've left the subject alone, but Abeni wasn't just anyone. She was Tinashe's sister. They'd been created and reared by the same two people. Right now she was using their shared genetics and their shared upbringing to Tinashe's great disadvantage. Bwah ha ha. Big Sister wins. Like in the videogame *Mortal Kombat*, she'd scored a flawless victory.

"Tinashe and Coinneach up a tree, k-i-s-s-i-n-g," Abeni sang.

She got a pillow in the face for that song but it was so worth it. She couldn't wait to see Eòghan again and tell him what she knew. Okay, not everything she knew, just the stuff that she knew about Tinashe. Okay, the stuff that she knew about Tinashe that wouldn't get either of them arrested. So caught up in her plans that she didn't realize that Tinashe was stalking her. Tinashe was almost upon her when she finally noticed and took off

running around the room like lunatics. It was a good thing that they'd both run track and field because they both ended up hurtling most of the room's objects including the twin beds. They ran round and round like three year olds. Tinashe was throwing threats her way and she was singing the chorus of that song. On and on they went until finally Abeni made it to the door. Being careful not to slam the door of the ancient castle, she unlocked her door then doubled back and peeked in at her sister who was waiting on her. Tinashe gave her a nogie, then kissed the top of her head, swatted her ass and sent her on her way with an admonition on what would happen if she woke her up at the crack of the actual crack of dawn.

Abeni went to her room and did a swan-dive onto the bed. In deference to the furniture's age and value, it wasn't her customary run full speed and swan dive onto the bed, but a kinder, more gentler swan dive. Lying back on the comfortable bed, she took a moment to gather herself. She was breathing heavy from all of the excitement that filled her, but she had a smile on her face. Tinashe might be a surly and bossy *little* sister, but Abeni so enjoyed having Tinashe as a sister. Reaching for a pillow, she stuffed it under her head and closed her eyes as she trekked down memory lane. Smiling, she recalled the number of times that their parents had been called to school to get them for acting up. It wasn't that they were bad; it was that they were so fucking bored in school. Finally, they'd skipped them two grades to give them more of a challenge, but their momma had put her foot down at them graduating early. So they'd pretty much gone to their fancy school half-days and then spent the other four hours doing cool shit with their daddy, who'd actually been at home more then their momma who was off blazing trails and all of that in her profession. While their peers had spent afternoons learning trig and French, they'd spent the afternoons learning sailing, hand-to-hand combat, practicing marksmanship, learning to rock-climb, scuba dive, and perfecting their Morse code. Sometimes they had entire conversations in dots and dashes. Tinashe hated talking in Morse but Abeni loved it because their Momma didn't know Morse, which meant that she could threaten Tinashe with impunity. She couldn't recall the number of times a frustrated Tinashe had told their Momma that she'd been dot-dashing her. Ah, the joys of being older. Once Tinashe had got a

little older and learned the fine art, it had become habit for Tinashe to greet her with a dot dot dash dot/dot dot dash/dash dot dash dot/dash dot dash|dash dot dash dash/dash dash dash/dot dot dash|dot dash dot dash dot dash (fuck you, full stop).

Thinking back on her childhood reminded her of just how unorthodox and therefore cool their parents were. Their parent's unorthodox marriage and unorthodox parenting was probably the reason why they'd turned out so great. Though different as night and day in personality, she and Tinashe were the best of friends. And despite Tinashe's incessant bitching about going on vacation with her, they rarely vacationed with other people. Other people tended to bore them. Once Tinashe had gone on a university trip with her peers and had come back with a bruise on her forehead. Abeni had been all set to go kick some ivy league ass when Tinashe had admitted that she'd gotten the bruise from banging her head repeatedly against the wall in an effort to knock herself unconscious because her colleague's were so boring.

Neither she nor her sister was the stuffy professor type that people thought that they'd be considering their impressive CVs. Despite Tinashe being fucking nuts, she was one of the smartest people that Abeni knew. Together, they'd written several tomes that had won all kinds of acclaim. The Professors Harper-MacCadaín were household names in the world of academia ... except that they were way hotter, especially Tinashe.

Tinashe had a bust line like a centerfold, a bootie like that chick on the Outkast videos, and legs like a gymnast. Underneath the tailored suits she wore to work and the cargo jeans and cross-trainers she wore everywhere else, was one smoking hot woman. Tinashe and Coinneach would make some beautiful babies ... if Coinneach could stop being an asshole long enough for Tinashe to get over the fact that she was aching to beat the shit out of him. Tinashe had a problem with men like Coinneach: big, muscular, dominant. In other words, a man she couldn't control. All of the "men" that she'd seen Tinashe with had been pussies, which is probably why Tinashe had picked them. The fact that they'd let themselves be run off is the sole reason why she didn't feel bad about having had her cousins run

them off. She smiled when she thought of the Winston Amazons. Her cousins were some straight up badass, crazy, fucking women full stop. They'd had way too much fun running off the pussy ass guys Tinashe had dated. Then again, so had she. Despite her penchant for running off any man near her baby sister, she'd bet the bank that Coinneach wasn't the kind of man who could be run off not by her bribes of money, her cousins high-powered rifles, or Tinashe's '*get the fuck away from me*' demeanor.

She might've been busy getting an eye-gasm from that hot ass Eòghan, but she'd definitely noticed the way Tinashe looked, or rather never stopped looking, at Coinneach. And she'd noticed the way that Coinneach always had to peel his eyes off of her sister in order to speak to her and Eòghan. They might hate each other, but hate was so close to love. Once they got past the arguing, the cussing, and the '*you ain't shits*', she'd put money on it that they'd set the sheets on fire with their passion. Tinashe was a lot of woman and despite her shitty history of man-selecting, she needed a man whose passion and integrity matched her own and whose strength exceeded hers. She may not have known Coinneach for more than a few hours, but absolutely nothing about Coinneach said '*pussy*.' That arrogant demeanor, those full lips, and that fuck me body however said that he knew his way around a pussy. Damn, she'd like to be a fly on the wall when those two finally surrendered to their passion. And dammit, they had passion.

Stripping down to her MIT red lace bra and her men's silk boxers with the Superman logo on them, she strolled to the adjoining bath to enjoy a hot shower. Tomorrow wasn't that far away and she had lots to do. She was going to have to get an early start if she wanted to get to Eòghan. He'd probably balk at her plan, but after his sense of adventure kicked in, she'd bet he'd go along with it.

Eòghan followed the beautiful women back to their hotel. Perhaps if Tinashe hadn't been so busy telling off Abeni and perhaps if Abeni hadn't been so busy being dragged about by Tinashe and muttering something about not killing her sister under her breath (in Morse code no less), they might have noticed him. Then again, perhaps not. He was still invisible to

everyone else and maybe the magic that allowed the sisters to see him and Coinneach didn't extend past their home grounds.

There wasn't really a need to follow the beautiful sisters as the Orkneys were one of the most peaceful places in existence and the sisters were clearly two of the most capable women he'd ever encountered. The truth is that he followed them just because he wanted to. The sisters cracked him up and after centuries with his surly ass brother, he could use this respite. He'd laughed his ass off as he watched the sisters make their way back to the castle hotel. The two were better than any comedy act that he'd ever seen and what made them even funnier was the fact that neither was trying to be funny.

When Abeni had asked Tinashe if she thought his brother was handsome, he'd had to stop himself from pissing himself with laughter ... and from growling with an emotion that he couldn't yet name. He'd calmed down when he realized that Abeni was trying to set Coinneach and Tinashe up. Catching himself singing that song that Abeni had taunted her sister with, he smiled as he made his way to the roof. Though he wanted to enter Abeni's room, he knew that she was tired. Plus, he'd wake her soon enough. Right now, he had plans of his own to make. All he had to do was convince his brother that rather than spending his week of freedom from their curse being a lonely, miserable bastard, he should spend it with Tinashe. He'd still be a bastard, but he wouldn't be lonely. Meanwhile, he could go hang out with Abeni. Though he usually spent his week bedding as many beautiful women as he could, this time he wanted to spend his week with Abeni. It wasn't because she was beautiful; it was in spite of it. Abeni was like no other woman he'd ever seen. Her sense of adventure shined brighter than her beauty and intelligence.

Chapter Three: Sen (Initiative)

Yawning, Abeni pushed her hair out of her eyes and dragged herself to a sitting position. Glancing at the superhero watch she smiled. It wasn't anywhere near the cost of Tinashe's prized Bremont BC-S1 watch but she liked it just fine. Tinashe had given her the watch as a prize for 'shutting the fuck up for longer than five seconds' and dammit she wore it with pride. Looking at it again she noted that the hour hand hadn't even reached four yet. Though she'd meant to get up early, she didn't mean three a.m. early. She wondered what in the world had awakened her when she heard the faint tapping. At first, she was worried, and then she recognized the pattern in the tapping. Someone was tapping out 'Can you come out and play?' in Morse code, which meant that whoever it was most likely not an enemy. Still, she was her daddy's daughter and Tinashe's sister so she used caution. Raising herself up on one elbow, she looked around the dark room. She couldn't immediately see anything but when the tapping started again she realized that it was coming from the window. Buzzed from excitement but not still not fully awake, Abeni grabbed her machete, dropped lightly to the floor, and snake-crawled to the window. Using the mirror of her compact, she directed it to the bit of window exposed by the edge of the curtain. She couldn't see much, but she saw the wealth of hair thanks to the full moon. She only knew two people who had hair like that and since she was pretty fucking sure that her daddy wasn't about to let her momma be perched up on the rooftop of a castle, it could only be one other person. Tossing the machete onto the bed, she rose from her crouched position and pulled aside the heavy drapes. Finding a grinning Eòghan staring back at her, she grinned and quickly unlatched the window allowing him inside her room.

"Hey, Eòghan. How's it hanging?" she greeted the ghost.

Despite her lack of sleep, Eòghan was still looking hot ... even in the dark ... especially in the dark ... next to a bed. She watched as he closed the window and walked over to the unmade bed and took a seat. Shaking her head, she fussed with the curtains for a bit in an effort to talk herself out of pinning him to the bed and having her way with all of that man. Though

the lights were off, the full moon that hovered over the island gave her enough light to fuel her fantasies.

"It is hanging well ... I think," Eòghan answered while still wearing his perpetual grin. Damn, he managed to look handsome, cute, and mischievous all at once.

"Is there a reason that you're hanging around on castle ledges at three-ish in the morning?" Abeni asked.

"I wanted to show you around the islands," Eòghan said.

"I've already seen almost everything worth seeing," she countered.

"Yeah, but I can show you a side of the Orkneys that only the native Orkney Islanders are familiar with and also some of the Orkneys that natives don't know exists," he tempted.

Abeni's eyes lit up. Despite the distraction of Eòghan's fineness and the early hour, she couldn't help but be impressed.

"Really? That would be so cool!" she said as she clapped her hands in glee and threw her hands in the air and did a funky little version of the wave.

"Get dressed and we'll go," Eòghan said enthusiastically.

Abeni was already scrambling through her clothes before he finished the sentence. Grabbing up the pile of clothes she'd already laid out, she ran to the bathroom and set a new record for her toilet.

Eòghan laughed as he watched Abeni hit the bathroom at full speed. If he'd had any doubts that she'd be interested in romping around the islands with him they were quickly squashed. Abeni shared his sense of adventure so he knew today would be great. The fun they'd have would far outweigh the cussing out that he'd get from Coinneach. He'd decided against telling his brother anything choosing instead to spend the eve at the castle. The first part of the eve was spent watching Abeni sleep from the rooftop. Dammit, he hated that he couldn't come in until he fully passed into the mortal realm. He would've loved to be in that bed with her. Then again, if

he was in that bed with her, they wouldn't leave it all week. Straightening out the fitted sheet, he closed his eyes and leaned against the headboard. That was a mistake. He could smell her scent heavy there. The fact that he could smell meant one thing: he was almost fully within the mortal realm.

Feeling his cock twitch at those thoughts he thought of other things. Looking around the room he thought about her sleeping. Abeni slept like she did everything else –with gusto. Abeni was a messy sleeper. She was snoring almost as soon as her head hit the pillow ... and not ladylike snores, but full on snores. Talk about sawing timber-the woman sounded like she was clearing an entire forest. He'd almost fallen from the roof after hearing that first snore. Looking around the room he couldn't help but smile. Her room looked like she'd been in some kind of fight with the bedding. The comforter, the sheet and two one pillow were strewn about the right side of the room. The comforter hadn't lasted five minutes. As soon as he saw her foot sticking out from the bedding, he'd made a bet with himself how long it'd take until the rest of her came out from under the bedding. The sheet had lasted another ten minutes but by the time she'd kicked it off of the bed, a pillow had already been tossed to the floor along with the sock on her right foot. He didn't know what the bedding was guilty of, but apparently she had some kind of vendetta against that sock because she'd thrown it off like a mugger. Before the full hour was up, she was facedown on the bed. Somehow she'd pulled up the fitted sheet and was wrapped up in that which was fascinating in itself being that she was half hanging off of the bed. He didn't know how she slept like that but she seemed awake enough.

As soon as he thought that thought, Abeni came bustling out of the bathroom, excitement coming from her in waves. Going over to her pack, she threw in a few items and hefted it onto her shoulder. Grabbing her propeller beanie she thrust it over her wild curls and turned to him.

"Dude, move your ass. And where's your hat?"

Chuckling, he moved said ass, and helped her out of the window amazed that it'd taken her less than five minutes to ready herself for their adventure.

Tinashe loved the castle that they were lodged in. Though the castle was spacious, it only had six bedrooms for let. Each of the spacious bedrooms had a definite character which was only enhanced by the Victorian furniture. Abeni had reserved the Lairds Room and the Twin Room. The Lairds Room was dominated by the beautiful four-poster bed but it was the view that took her breath away. The woodlands and sea looked like they came straight out of a fairy tale. Despite having twin single beds, the Twin Room was spacious and also offered a breathtaking view of the sea. Though Abeni had offered her the Lairds Room, Tinashe opted for the Twin Room because the Laird Room was a little too much for her. Truth be known, it freaked her out a little bit and she couldn't imagine sleeping in there. That room reminded her that though Balfour was a hotel, it was first and foremost a castle. And not just any castle, but a castle in Scotland, where magic was still very much a part of the present. Still, she was enjoying her stay there – not that she'd admit as much to Abeni. Finishing her toilet, she climbed into the nearest twin bed and was asleep before her head hit the pillow.

Coinneach both loved and hated Scotland and for a Scotsman, that was damn near treason. Scotland was his home but for the past two centuries and then some, it had become his prison. Whilst in the immortal realms there were no limits to his travel. Having the blood of a long lineage of explorers running through his veins, he'd often wished to see the whole world when he was younger, and mortal. He scoffed at his wishes. His wish had been the whims of a spoiled boy. His uncles had always told him that there was a price to pay for every adventure but he couldn't see that then. Two centuries had widened his line of vision.

He'd swum all of the oceans of the world and visited every country at least once. But like the man who seeks immortality without also requesting endless youth, he didn't recognize the little things that accompanied dreams. The whole world was his, but the whole world was under the locked glass of a museum case. For three-quarters of the year, he couldn't touch, he couldn't feel, he couldn't smell, he couldn't taste. He was limited to seeing and hearing the humanity which he was no longer a part of. Sure,

he had his week's reprieve but during that week he was confined to the soil of Scotland.

He imagined he'd scoured the whole of Scotland a hundred times over to find the one woman that could not simply restore his humanity, but to find the one woman worth giving up immortality for. He wanted a woman whose fire filled up all of the empty spaces within him. And there were so many ... so, so many.

As always, when he passed into the mortal world, he stood on the beach wearing nothing but his trademark scowl. Hair tossing furiously by the brisk wind, he slowly strolled to the water for his customary swim. It wasn't that he enjoyed swimming all that much; it was that it allowed him the rush of feeling. He welcomed the feel of the wind, the smell of the briny sea, the cold of the water, and the burn of his muscles that would occur after he'd swum two miles. And he'd welcome the exhaustion that would come from the physical exertion that swimming during high tide would bring.

While Coinneach brooded, Eòghan plotted. While Abeni slept (as she'd already plotted), Tinashe slept soundly in the next room completely unaware of her sister's fly-by-the-seat-of-her-pants middle of the night adventure. Just as Tinashe was unaware of her sister's plan, Coinneach was unaware of his brother's plan ... but he'd find out soon enough.

Coinneach felt the slide of silky limbs as they twined around his body. He couldn't help the moan that escaped him nor could he stop his body's reaction to the feel of something so soft, the smell of something so feminine. He knew that smell but couldn't quite place it. Indulging in the softness and warmth of the limbs surrounding him, he didn't immediately open his eyes, instead choosing to savor the feeling. Yes, he savored the feel instead of the moment as he had an excess of moments and a famine of feeling. He gave himself over to the feeling. On his back, he rolled his hips wanting to feel the softness of that feminine body surrounding his. Instead of the softness he felt the coldness of ice cubes. *What the?!*

"Fucking hell!" he roared as he opened his eyes and jumped to a sitting position ... or at least tried to. He would've succeeded but there were strong thighs straddling him. All he got for his struggle was almost killed being that he had an angry woman straddling him and a razor sharp knife not even a hair's breath away from him. Feeling the remaining ice cubes melt on his naked chest, he simply glared at the woman holding the knife. Though he'd only known her for a few hours, Tinashe had looked mad every time he looked at her. Did the woman ever wear an expression other than a scowl? Even in his dreams she'd been scowling. Of course, in his dreams she was scowling because he wouldn't fuck her harder, faster, deeper. Damn, she was a surly woman, especially with a deadly weapon in her hand. He didn't know what had pissed her off. Perhaps it was the fact that the sky was blue or the grass was green. Before he could figure it out, she spoke ... or rather threatened.

"Where is she motherfucker and don't waste my fucking time with lies or bullshit because I'm so not in the mood. Fuck with me and I guarantee that the rest of your life will be real fucked up. So do us both a favor and talk and talk now!" Tinashe snarled.

"Woman, I have no idea what the bloody hell you're talking about!" Coinneach snarled back mad that he wanted to fuck her despite hating her.

Of all of the ways to wake up on the dawn of the Freedom Week as he'd named it, being doused in ice cubes was definitely not on his list. Neither was being threatened with death. The fact that he'd been dreaming about the best sex of his life before he was so rudely interrupted didn't help his temper any.

"Bullshit!" Tinashe ground out between clenched teeth. "You and your brother have done something with Abeni and I want to know what and I want to know right fucking now!"

"Woman, if I knew I would tell you so that I could be rid of you."

Turning away from her but keeping her and that knife within eyesight, he yelled for his brother. "Eòghan!"

Hopefully Mr. I'm-Everybody's-Friend would appease this woman and he could go back to bed and back to his dreams. When he received no

answer Coinneach frowned and tried to get up so that he could go in search of his wayward brother. He narrowly missed impaling his eyeball on the blade of the knife that Tinashe refused to move. He could probably get the knife away from her but he really wasn't ready to chance losing an eye or a major organ if he was wrong, therefore he tried diplomacy.

"Look, harpy. Move so I can see where the hell my brother is."

He watched as her eyes narrowed. "I'm going to let you up but you should know that I also have good aim. Try anything funny and ..."

"You'll do something bad," he interrupted.

He watched as Tinashe smiled at him. He was thrown off by the smile but then he remembered the reason for it. Oh yeah, she was threatening to kill him.

"No Coinneach, I'll do something so insane that both Quentin Tarantino and Oliver Stone will be like, damn that was overkill. And then, I'll follow it up with something bad," she smiled and rolled off of him.

Coinneach didn't scare easily but then he'd never been threatened so passionately. He kept a close eye on that knife as he got out of bed. The silence was broken only by her quick intake of breath when she caught sight of his naked body but he paid it no heed.

He instead stomped off to his brother's room where he flung open the door only to find an empty room. Growling out curses, Coinneach turned on his heel and once again just about impaled himself on the damned blade in Tinashe's hand. Damn, that woman was stealthy. Not having time to deal with more than one headache at a time, he went to disarm her but found that task nigh impossible. Instead of trying to get her weapon, he settled for grabbing her wrist ... and pressed. He might not be up on every bit of pop culture but he was up on his hand-to-hand combat ... and apparently so was she. Before he could grab her up and toss her over his shoulder, he felt the unmistakable feel of something sharp in the vicinity of his kidney.

“Coinneach, I want my sister and I want her now. If your brother has hurt her, I’m going to kill him. And if you try and stop me, I’ll kill you too,” she said with absolutely no emotion but hate burning in her eyes.

“I am stronger than you,” he began.

“But you underestimate me,” she interrupted. “And you obviously underestimate my love for my sister.”

Rubbing a hand over his face, he stepped back. This was getting them nowhere. It was obvious that he was stronger than her and it was just as obvious that she had no plans to back down. The only way he’d be able to win would be to hurt her. It was obvious that the only way that he was going to get that weapon out of her hand would be to break her wrist. He might be a bastard but he wasn’t a man that hit women. The males in his family had instilled in him the proper way to treat a woman and regardless of how far removed he was from his youth, he wasn’t about to forget that lesson.

“I’m going to get dressed. Then I’m going to go hunt down my brother and your sister. And when I find them I’m going to tell them off good and proper. But first, I need to get dressed without worrying that you’re going to stab me.”

“Fine. Get dressed,” she said as she backed up.

Blowing out a breath of disgust, he stalked back to his own bedroom. Why he’d expected her to wait there he didn’t know. She was right on his heels. Something about her silently shadowing him disturbed him. The woman moved without making any sound whatsoever. It was obvious that she’d had some sort of training and that whoever had trained her had done a damn fine job. The question however was who and why. He didn’t realize that he’d asked his question aloud until she answered, or rather spat the answer at him.

“My dad’s seal,” she spat.

“Does that mean that your mother’s a supermodel?” He smirked as he asked the question.

“You’re so not funny, but to answer your question, actually, she is.”

That threw him for a loop. And as always when he was thrown for a loop his diplomacy kicked in. "So you obviously take after your father."

"Yep, I'm trained to kill a man quickly and in a number of ways," she returned with a smile.

The smile should've alerted him, but no, he was too taken aback with how such a thing transformed her to think of anything else.

"So, whose the asshole in your family that you take after?" she asked.

"The last person that said something about my family woke up with some broken bones," he warned.

"Well then obviously, that person wasn't a southerner because when you piss off a southerner you don't wake up ... at all," she purred that last bit directly in his ear.

Two things happened. First, he got a hard cock and second, there was no second. He was turned on by the harpy. Still, as turned on by the woman as he was, self preservation came first and Tinashe was too close to him with too many weapons still at her disposal. If the twitch in her eye was anything to go by, she was all too ready to use them on him.

Turning abruptly, he picked her up and tossed her over his shoulder. Tinashe did not appreciate his actions if her cussing was anything to go by. Depositing the struggling Tinashe on his bed, he rummaged through his closet for something to wear. Being that he was fully in the mortal world now it was necessary to dress appropriately. He quickly selected appropriate clothing. It only took him a few minutes to grab his stuff but it was a long few minutes being that she insulted him the entire time. She was like a Rosetta Stone course in insulting people.

"Well it is most obvious that my idiot brother has gone traipsing off with your equally touched in the head sister and if you want to find them you should shut your mouth and let me get dressed," Coinneach said as he forwent underwear and pulled on his faded button fly jeans. Slipping on thick socks, he shoved his feet into his black suede work boots before finally reaching for his shirt. Throwing on a t-shirt, he finalized his outfit with a

black cable knit sweater. He'd just popped his head through the neck of the sweater when he noticed Tinashe right up in his space.

"Abeni's only a little bit touched in the head but if you talk about my sister like that again or use that fucking tone with me again, I will hurt you, Bitch," she said and then with a toss of her head she went to his bed and made herself comfortable and glared a hole in him.

Coinneach took a steadying breath. He was so close to doing something like picking her fine ass up, grinding her sweet pussy against his hard cock and fucking her up against the wall. It was bad enough that he'd been knee-deep in the throes of making love to her in his dream, but now she was tempting him. Didn't she know that it gave the wrong impression when a woman sat on a man's bed? Never mind that she was cussing him out for all that she was worth ... he was still turned on as hell. Taking a deep breath, he willed his cock to stay down and stop trying to cause trouble even if that trouble smelled like the most delicious meal he could ever remember tasting in the past two centuries.

Tinashe was going to fucking kill Abeni when she found her. When she'd woken up this morning at a reasonable hour she'd immediately known that something was up. Abeni never let her sleep in except when she was into some shit. And she'd bet the bank that the shit she was into was named Eòghan. After knocking on her door and getting no answer, she'd deftly picked the lock and entered. There was no note, no nothing, but there didn't need to be. She knew how her sister operated. The fact that her pack was gone was clue number one. Clue number two was the fact that the long pins she used to keep her stupid propeller beanie on were gone, meaning that she'd taken her time leaving. Still, Abeni was her sister, and she just had to be sure that all was well. She could've gone willingly only to have Eòghan turn on her and try and do something that was going to cause Tinashe to kill him.

Tinashe would have to invent a mathematical equation to calculate just how many guys that she'd had to have a word of prayer with. Well, her and her cousins. Man, those chicks were bonafide crazy on their best day.

She'd hate to have to call them over to dispose of Eòghan and his fine ass, surly brother, but she would. Better them than her daddy. Her daddy was a laid back, gentle man ... except when it came to his daughters.

So here she was, in this cave once more. Never mind that it was beautiful and more opulent than any five-star hotel she'd been in, it was still a cave. And not only was she in a cave, she was in Coinneach's bedroom ... watching his fine ass dress. Actually, she'd never stopped watching him. He was a good-looking man ... if you liked conceited, arrogant bastards who were ripped with muscle. Sitting on his bed had her thinking all kinds of delicious things she could do to him. Things like ride his face. She closed her eyes in an effort to stop the images that assailed her - images of a naked, sweaty Coinneach calling out her name. Damn, even in her fantasies the man scowled. Of course he was scowling because she was working his ass, but still. Coinneach reminded her of someone but she just couldn't put her finger on who it was.

"I thought you knew where to find them," Tinashe hurled at him.

He heard the accusations and he felt her seething anger. Her anger was a living breathing thing that grew exponentially every time Coinneach came up empty handed, which so far today was most of the day. He'd been to several islands in the Orkneys but yet there'd been no sign of them. He knew his brother had been there with Abeni but somehow they'd managed to always be a step ahead of himself and the she-devil named Tinashe.

"You should have waited at Balfour," was all that he said as he skirted a rock pool filled with small crabs. He could feel the wind picking up and the strong wind made for stronger waves. The waves looked deceptively small, but that was a danger. The waves were strong and would suddenly spring up in size without rhyme or reason. The longer they stayed on the rocky shore, the more danger they were in. He turned to warn Tinashe of the wave that was fast approaching them but there was no need as she'd already gotten herself out of harm's way.

"I would've if your brother hadn't absconded with my big sister," she said.

"Did it ever occur to you that your sister could've abducted my baby brother?"

"Not at all because my sister is innocent," she said with a straight face.

"Isn't that what evil dictators say about their actions?" he asked.

"No, you have dictators mixed up with benevolent despots. Abeni is more of a benevolent despot than an evil dictator."

"Really? How?" he asked in an effort to keep her talking about something that didn't involve him and his brother being all kinds of sorry motherfuckers.

"Yes, really," she began.

He interrupted her in an effort to warn her about the rogue wave approaching but he was a second too late.

"Oh for fucks sake!" Tinashe cried angrily as she shook her head and tried to get the sea water out of her hair before it did any damage. Feeling the beginning of a deep curl pattern, she knew that it was too late. All of the work she'd done with flat iron was already unraveling. She was now adding sea water to her list of things she hated. It ranked right under birds but right before humidity. In fact, anything that fucked with her hair was on her list.

"Woman we best take our leave," the bastard said.

Coinneach sounding like he was smiling but when she turned to look at him he was straight-faced. She ignored the brightness of his eyes that signaled his hidden mirth, and not simply because she was suddenly taken aback with how fucking beautiful he was when he was something other than surly. Oh well, at least he didn't full on laugh at her she thought because then she'd definitely have to toss him over a cliff regardless of how fine he was. Suppressing her need to punch something, she followed his wonderfully tight ass over the few rocks that would lead them back to the

hired 4X4 Land Rover Defender she'd hired as soon as she discovered that Abeni was missing.

Though she was dead on Coinneach's six, when they reached the vehicle Coinneach was miraculously holding out a towel. She didn't ask him where he'd gotten it, instead she took it gratefully and wiped at the excess moisture on her face and neck. Lost in the feeling of drying the sea water off of her person, she got the feeling that she was being watched. Pausing in her drying, she lifted her head and looked directly into the brilliant, color-shifting eyes belonging to Coinneach Francisco Stiùbhart. Regardless of how many kinds of asshole Coinneach was, the man had mesmerizing eyes. Only one other man had eyes that demanded such attention: Aodhfiann Patrick MacCadáin.

Most people couldn't stand to look her daddy in the eye. They said it was because her daddy gave off an aura of 'I'll fuck you up-ness' but she couldn't see it. Her daddy was the most gentle of men. Still, she could understand how his direct gaze could be unnerving. His left eye was a brilliant green and his right eye was the color of molten gold. So were her and Abeni's when they weren't wearing contacts. Needing to break the spell that the big bastard before her was slowly weaving, she gave her hair one last swipe.

"Please tell me that I do not have seaweed in my hair," she said. It was an innocuous comment however it was a shame that her comment came out sounding so husky.

Biting her bottom lip, she awaited Coinneach's answer.

"Nay woman, there is no seaweed stupid enough to sully such beauty," he said softly.

Tinashe gasped. The slight Scottish brogue was in his voice but his comment was delivered with such sincerity and in such an intimate tone that she had to start chanting over and over in her head that Coinneach was a bastard so that she wouldn't walk into his strong arms and demand that he kiss her. Luckily, she had a strong will therefore it only took forty times before she was able to regain her usual calm. Her heartbeat had settled

back down, and she was sure that her eyes were less turbulent, but there was absolutely nothing that she could do about her wet pussy.

"So where are we going to look next?" she asked as she climbed into the vehicle. Though she hadn't registered any other drivers, she'd allowed Coinneach to drive because he knew the area better than she and then there was that whole steering wheel on the wrong side of the vehicle and driving on the wrong side of the road. At home, she was more of a 'bulldoze some shit over' type driver, then again she had a big ass GMC Sierra Denali 4x4 and she knew the area. She was working with a different set of variables here in the Orkneys and she could just imagine driving into some ditch and having to deal with an *'I told you so'* from Coinneach.

"I have run out of places," he admitted.

If anyone else had said that, she would've brained him, but Coinneach wasn't anyone else. It hadn't escaped her notice just how frustrated Coinneach seemed to be at their failure to locate their siblings. Perhaps she'd been a tad wrong about Coinneach the Bastard. He seemed like he'd like nothing better than to wrap his big, long-fingered hands around his brother's neck and wring until hopefully Eòghan found some sense. Tinashe smiled at the thought of doing the same to Abeni though that probably wouldn't go down very well with their Momma. Their Momma had a thing about her and her siblings fighting each other. *'Fight anybody else but if I catch any of y'all fighting each other, it is so going to be on,'* was probably the first whole sentence she'd learned, right after she discovered cake. Dammit 'cake' was a complete sentence. It could be both a question and a demand.

Her musings about her favorite food were interrupted by Coinneach's soft, lyrical voice. "Eòghan would never hurt Abeni, Woman."

Tinashe would normally bristle at constantly being referred to as 'woman' but somehow she knew that from Coinneach, it wasn't an insult.

"But the flip side of your promise is whether Abeni would hurt Eòghan," she sighed. "Abeni can be a bit ... rough," she said thinking about the various scrapes that Abeni had led them into.

"Though my brother is an idiot at the best of times, I am confident that he can handle one woman," Coinneach responded.

"But are you confident that the Orkneys can withstand the combined force of your brother and my sister?"

"That I do not know though Scotland has survived much worse."

"I don't know if I should be offended that you put my sister in the same category as war and famine, though I can understand," she sighed. "Your brother and my sister has 'international incident' written all over it. Though I love my sister and am confident in my ability to do so, I don't relish the idea of breaking her out of foreign prison."

"Tinashe, I swear on my life that my brother will protect her from any harm."

She knew that whatever else Coinneach was, that he was not a liar. She went back to chanting in her head about Coinneach being a bastard, but she stopped after only three bars. This time all the chanting in the world wasn't going to work. In fact, it might not work ever again. Coinneach Francisco Stiùbhart had breached her defenses and there was nothing that she could do but ride it out in much the same way she rode out adventures with Abeni. And just like adventures with her sister, she hoped that when the ride skidded to a halt that there was good medical care nearby.

Looking down at her prized Bremont BC-S1 watch and noting the time she realized that they'd been out damn near all day. "Fine, I'm starving. Let's eat," she said.

Eòghan laughed along with Abeni as the dolphins performed for them. One dolphin swam up and brazenly nuzzled at Abeni's hand. Her face lit up even more if such a thing was possible. Turning more fully towards him, she grinned at him.

"Did you see that? Wow!" she said excitedly.

The dolphins continued performing for a few minutes and yet Eòghan saw none of it. He could only watch his new friend. They had been out on

their adventure since the wee hours of the morning and Eòghan could not remember any other time in his life when he'd been so energized or so happy in another's company.

Though he was loathe to end the day, he had to insure that she rested properly. "We should get back to Balfour," he said softly.

Smiling and waving at the dolphins, Abeni linked an arm through his and they walked back to the vehicle he'd procured for their journey.

"Thank you so much for today, Eòghan. It was so ... wow. I saw common seal puppies and dolphins and even a whale," Abeni breathed happily as she settled into step with him. She chattered happily as they walked to the boat that he'd hired to ferry them around.

"Anytime lass, anytime," he said softly as he took them back to Castle Balfour.

Abeni couldn't recall a time when she'd had so much fun. Eòghan was so much fun. Not once had she heard one of her little sister's customary lines. No threats spilled from Eòghan's luscious mouth. There were no series of dots and dashes promising dire retribution. As they boated up to the castle, she realized that for once, she had an adventure that didn't end with either her or Tinashe visiting the local ER. And Eòghan had even allowed her to drive the twenty-seven foot, high performance, kickass speedboat. Woo hoo for her! Obviously, she and Eòghan were meant to adventure together.

Turning to him, she made her grand declaration before she could find one of the ten million or so good reasons to stop the words that tumbled from her mouth. "Eòghan, you have to go on vacation with me from now on. You are so much fun."

"We need to get a map and plan where we're going to visit next," she said happily.

"I'll kill her," Tinashe ground out as she stood. She was about to stomp over and strangle her sister when she saw Eòghan and Abeni finally drag their asses into Castle Balfour round about midnight, but a strong hand

wrapping around her wrist reminded her that they weren't alone. Even though she'd enjoyed yet another scrumptious meal in the beautiful Victorian dining room, right now she was sitting in the sitting alongside Coinneach on a bench overlooking the gardens on the private grounds. And they weren't the only guests enjoying the beautiful grounds. Even though it was midnight, the Orkneys were located in the land of the Midnight Sun. It would be light until around two a.m.

"Maybe we should wait to hear what they have to say," Coinneach suggested.

Involuntarily, she reached into her pocket for her dagger. Surely, something had taken over Coinneach to make him appear so reasonable. Turning slowly, she was about to ask him who he was and what he'd done with the bastard formerly known as Coinneach when she noticed the tension in his jaw. His jaw was clenched so tight that it was a wonder that he didn't break his teeth. Releasing her hold on the dagger, she linked her hand with his knowing that Coinneach wasn't as unaffected as his calm tone belied. Still, before either of them could pretend that they weren't totally fucked off with their siblings, lightning shook the ground. Before she could even form the first dot or dash, Coinneach had her in his arms and was running full speed for the doors of Balfour Castle. Seeing a flash of red next to her, she noted that Eòghan had Abeni in his arms and was running alongside them. Setting them both on their feet in the doorway, they commanded them to get their arses inside and stay there before they both ran outside.

"What the hell?" Tinashe and Abeni asked simultaneously.

Before they could make a move, the entire castle was in a scramble. Not knowing what to do, they got the hell out of the way. Within minutes, all guests were safely tucked inside the castle ... a little wetter, but safe.

The storm that hit was one of the most violent and sudden storms that Abeni had ever witnessed. And that was saying something being that she was from Georgia where they had their share of severe weather including

drought, thunderstorms and hurricanes. And they had some hella storms, but Abeni had never seen one like this. The sky darkened to an ominous charcoal, the grounds shook from the bass of hard thunder, the sky exploded in bursts of white from the fiercest lightning she'd ever witnessed. No one was going anywhere, except for in hot baths and warm showers and eventually to bed. Since all rooms were reserved, Abeni decided to give her room to Coinneach and Eòghan being that there was no way they could boat back to their cave in the filthy weather, regardless of how well that boat was made, and since it was a Baja, she knew it was well-made. The Twin Room would've been a better choice for them but she knew that there was no way in anybody's hell that Tinashe was spending the night in the Lairds Room. And she knew that her little sister was already quite fucked off with her though she hid it well. Tinashe's eye only twitched a little bit and she looked like she'd only ground down a few of her molars from clenching her jaw so tightly.

After taking turns with the shower, she'd completely forgotten about Tinashe being mad. Well, okay she didn't forget. She just no longer gave a flying fuck. She was too amped up to sleep especially when she had so much to talk about. So ignoring her sister's attempts at ignoring her, Abeni told Tinashe about her day in great detail.

Coinneach was so close to killing Eòghan that it wasn't funny. The only thing that stopped him was the fact that Lairds Room was a beautiful work of art and he doubted that the owners would appreciate it if he killed his brother in their castle. Though he didn't mind his brother going out, it was clear that Tinashe was worried sick about her sister. It was hard to believe that Tinashe was the little sister being that she was the one that played sentinel. Then again, Abeni was slightly insane.

"You should've called. Her sister was worried," he said after he came out of his bath.

"You're right," Eòghan said.

Coinneach was surprised that Eòghan didn't offer any excuses but the fact that he didn't alerted him to the fact that his carefree brother was doing

some serious thinking. Not really in the mood to rain on his parade any more, Coinneach simply let it be. As the Americans said: no harm; no foul. Plus, Eòghan and Abeni's absence had allowed him to spend time with Tinashe.

Settling into bed, Coinneach growled. He was too damn old to be sharing a room with his little brother and too damn big to be sharing a double bed with another man. Since neither of them had spare clothes with them, and neither of them wore underwear, they simply slept in the nude. Hell, they'd done it before, but last time they did it they were wee bairn.

"This does not make us gay," Eòghan said.

Coinneach couldn't help but chuckle as he heard the smile in his brother's voice. "I'm too much man to let a puny man such as yourself make me uncomfortable about my sexuality," he joked back.

"Did you just ... laugh?" Eòghan asked.

"Perhaps, however if you spread such vicious lies about me doing the like, I will deny all knowledge of such an occurrence."

"Ah, well then, I shall keep it to myself."

"That is best. I'd hate to have to kill you. You're no me, but you're a decent facsimile," Coinneach joked.

It felt good to joke with his brother. He hadn't done the like in decades probably. Obviously, the beautiful women had done something to them. Coinneach was about to drift off to sleep when he heard Eòghan's soft admission.

"Ach, Coinneach, I like Abeni. I like Abeni more than I've liked anything in my long existence."

"I figured you might."

"What should I do?"

"Take her out again tomorrow, but give someone your damn itinerary," he responded.

"But what about the next day?"

“It will take care of itself.”

“And the day after that?” Eòghan asked.

“That too will take care of itself.”

“But what about the curse?”

“Tell her the truth,” Coinneach answered hurting for his brother.

“What if she leaves me?”

“What if she doesn’t?”

“Will you come out with us tomorrow? We could have some real fun,” Eòghan finished.

Coinneach knew that his brother wasn’t simply asking so that he could experience his sunny disposition; Eòghan was asking because he was scared. Coinneach understood that. He experienced it on the eve of every seventh day of Freedom Week. “Yes, brother. I will attend you. Now get some rest, those women require a lot of energy.”

Tinashe wondered if she’d get her refund back if she killed Abeni but did so in a way that it didn’t soil the room. Abeni hadn’t shut up since setting foot in the room. Even as she showered, she chattered ... and chattered ... and chattered. She briefly shut up when she gargled but that thirty second reprieve wasn’t nearly enough to calm her nerves. She thought that she’d get a little bit of a reprieve when she took her own shower, but no. Abeni simply ripped back the curtain and continued her conversation after remarking on the size of her ass.

“Dammit, Abeni, I’m trying to shower. A little privacy, please?”

“I’ve seen everything you have and besides we have the same parts even though you’re a little more bootylicious,” she said as she smacked her ass cheek.

Tinashe had to threaten to wipe her ass with Abeni’s precious and stupid propeller beanie to get her to close the shower curtain. All that did was cause her to run in and secure her cap. Thirty seconds later she was back in the bathroom, sitting on the toilet chattering away. Apparently, Eòghan

was like a few steps below the big J-man because every other word out of Abeni's mouth was Eòghan.

Now that she was settled in bed with the light out, and the covers securely over her head, she'd hoped that Abeni would take the hint and go to fucking sleep but nooooooooooooo. Abeni was still chattering.

"And Eòghan let me drive the speedboat. It rocked. And then Eòghan took me to see the dolphins and seal puppies. And we saw a whale, Tina-she. A real, live whale. I wonder how many fish sticks you could get from a whale. And then..."

Tinashe didn't know what else Abeni said after the whale-fish sticks comment, and she didn't care. Jumping out of bed, she dragged a startled Abeni out of bed. Walking to the door she threw it open and marched next door. Knocking on the door, she slapped her hand over Abeni's mouth and tapped her foot agitatedly while waiting for one of those fine ass Francisco Stiùbhart boys to answer. As soon as the door opened, Tinashe shoved Abeni in the room totally oblivious to the fact that both men were as naked as the day that they were born.

"Okay, since you've impressed her so freaking much Eòghan, you're sharing a room with her tonight. Coinneach, come with me. Though I'm yay close to killing Abeni, I'm not letting her stay in a room with two men. So move your ass, I'm tired," she said.

Not getting anyone to move fast enough to suit her she shoved Abeni into the bed, grabbed Coinneach's hand and marched his naked ass to her room. Once inside, she slid into bed hoping to finally get some rest. A clearing of her throat caused her to sigh deeply before turning and facing him.

"Yes?"

"I don't want to sleep in this bed."

"Fine, take mine," she said.

"Only if you are in it," Coinneach answered as he slid into the small bed with her.

“That other bed smells like Abeni.”

“Are you saying that my sister stinks?” she asked incredulously.

“No, I’m not but my brother will understand, now hush and go to sleep. We have a big day ahead of us tomorrow.”

“Yeah, we do and you know what? It better not stop until the little hand is on eight. That would be this number right here,” she said as she held up her left arm and pointed to her watch.

“Do you sleep with that watch on?”

“Yes, now go to sleep, Coinneach.”

“Why?”

“Because it’s my favorite. Abeni has her stupid propeller beanie; I have my Bremont BC-S1 watch. It’s functional and way more kickass than anything in Abeni’s wardr-,” she stopped when she felt Coinneach’s mouth on her ear. Oh goodness, that felt so good.

“I’m not sure what most of what you said means,” Coinneach said as he continued nibbling on her ear.

“Coinneach, do you mind?” she asked.

“Not at all, now shh, you said you were tired. Go to sleep,” he whispered.

No he didn’t just tell her to go to sleep like he was the boss of her? Yeah, he did but Tinashe let Coinneach’s bossiness slide. As long as he shut the fuck up, she just couldn’t be bothered to care. And the fact that Coinneach felt so delicious behind her had absolutely nothing to do with her quick acquiescence.

Chapter Four: *Zanshin* (Awareness; Continuing Mind/Heart)

Eòghan grabbed Abeni's wrists as she tickled him. In spite of his resolve, his laughter wheezed out. Abeni had been attempting to tickle him for the last ten minutes and for the last nine minutes and forty five seconds, he'd been doing his damndest to avoid her frisky fingers. Alas, his attempts to stave her off were to no avail. Despite looking all innocent ... and soft ... and beautiful ... and his. *Oh shit, there went that possessiveness again.* Despite how unintimidating Abeni looked, he could tell by the way that she moved that she was well-trained. She was agile, quick, and had a sharp mind and an even better sense of humor.

"Say it!" Abeni demanded as she straddled his waist. Though both her wrists were in his hands, she acted as if she had the upper hand. Eòghan grinned up at her even as he shook his head no.

Abeni arched a single brow at him before emitting a long sigh. "Well you asked for it bro," she said as she expertly broke the hold that he had on her wrists and began to tickle him all over again.

Eòghan flipped his tormenter onto her back, his long, hard, naked body pressing her down into the soft mattress. Grabbing Abeni's hands he held them above her head with one of his and smiled down at her. His body roared and his eyes glazed over as he took in the beautiful picture of Abeni wriggling beneath him.

"You say it my little Abeni," Eòghan demanded softly as Abeni slowed her wriggling and stared up at him. Her laughter slowed to a halt as she realized the vulnerable position she was in. Still, she did not attempt to escape him. In fact, she didn't even put up a token protest.

"No," she said with a shake of her head.

Eòghan couldn't help the smile that overcame him. Though Abeni's breath caught at the sight of it, she still didn't attempt to get out from under him.

"Well then, I'm just going to have to convince you, *Mo Dhachaidh* (*my home*)," Eòghan said softly as he bent his head and nipped at the skin above

the neckline of the t-shirt that Abeni wore as nightwear. He felt rather than heard the gasp from his new friend, his best friend, his ... just his.

"Dude, not fair!" she cried half-heartedly.

Eòghan continued to nip none-to-gently at the exposed skin of Abeni's neck and jaw. He nibbled at her ear lobe and was stunned when he realized that Abeni was gasping and grinding up into his heavier body that lay between her soft thighs. Her soft breasts caressed his exposed skin but her nipples were practically poking a hole into his naked chest.

Eòghan had no idea when their game of tickle had turned into something hot and passionate but it had and neither of them was thinking of anything save pleasure as his tongue laved at her distended nipples through her t-shirt.

"Ahhh," he heard her gasped breath.

Eòghan felt his head clouding with lust as the smell of Abeni's arousal reached his nose and tempted his taste buds. Closing his eyes he leaned his face into the curve of Abeni's neck and breathed deeply as he attempted to control the roiling emotions that were threatening to take his good sense. He was so close to giving into temptation ... so, so close.

Abeni had somehow managed to get her wrists from his firm grip and was now grabbing handfuls of his hair. He wasn't sure if she was using it to push him away or to push his face into her skin until he felt her lush hips widen even more to cradle his own. When he felt himself sink deeper into her body he knew he was mere moments away from ripping Abeni's clothes to shreds and sinking his hard body deep inside of hers. Taking a hiss of a breath Eòghan did what the gentleman in him demanded and pulled himself away from the temptation that was Abeni. He had to. He was cursed. Moving to the edge of the bed he sat with his back towards her so that she wouldn't see the struggle on his face.

The silence that stretched between them felt longer than all of the time that he and his brother had been cursed. He wasn't sure how long he sat there trying to get himself together but it wasn't working. He was still hard, he still wanted Abeni ... and he knew that that wasn't going to change.

Eòghan believed that Abeni had fallen asleep being that she was quiet for once, but then her lyrical voice cut through the silence.

"Fine, the conquistador hat is equally as cool as my propeller beanie."

Of all of the things that he was expecting her to say, that was not it. He'd expected some recriminations, some cussing, some name-calling; he hadn't expected the lifeline that she threw him. That's what her words were: a lifeline. He exhaled the fear and frustration that he'd been holding in. And just like that his normal calm was restored and his familiar smile settled over his visage. Turning, he faced the woman who had done what even his asshole ancestors hadn't been able to do: she captured him. And the scary part? She hadn't even been trying!

Eòghan moved so that he could pull Abeni into his arms. Once she was settled against his chest he pulled the cover over them both and just rested with the crazy woman he was in love with. Soon she was snoring - loudly - yet he didn't mind in the least. All he could do was gaze at the most delightful sight he'd ever seen - the woman he loved wrapped in his arms ... and be glad that he was faster than her so that she was on the side of the bed that he'd previously occupied. He loved his big brother but something in him rebelled at the idea of Abeni sleeping where Coinneach had lain.

Abeni hadn't meant for their tickling to get out of hand. She really hadn't but when she'd realized that Eòghan was naked - and wasn't the least bit concerned about his goods hanging out- she had to do something to act like his big, hard, fine ass body wasn't distracting her. If Tinashe could be totally nonchalant about busting in their room like gangbusters and dragging a butt naked Coinneach out of the room and leaving her in the room with a naked and fine Eòghan then surely she could be nonchalant too. Though Europeans had a lot fewer hang-ups about nudity than Americans she was not only American, she was southern. Still, she was a grown woman so she could handle Eòghan's fineness.

That was her intent when she'd gone to crawl into bed. Apparently, Eòghan had some kind of issue with the way she went about it for he'd

pounced on her and dragged her off of the bed so fast that they would've landed in a heap on the floor if not for his quick reflexes.

"Okay, I can just sleep on the floor," she said.

"You're too soft to do such a thing," he protested.

"Well by your actions it'd seem that you don't want me on the bed."

"I want you on the bed, just not that side of the bed."

"Um, okay. Is this some strange, white boy thing?" she asked.

"No, it's a territory thing," he answered.

"What the fuck does that mean?"

"It means only people with the coolest hats get to sleep on that side of the bed," he answered.

"Then that would be me," she said as she dove for that side of the bed.

Eòghan was too quick and thus they'd ended up rolling all over one half of the bed. Even when she'd had him pinned down he prevented her from going anywhere near the other side of the bed. And then they'd started kissing ... and suddenly Abeni didn't give a flying fuck about anything else except being in Eòghan's strong embrace. At 6'1" it wasn't often that a man made her feel petite, but Eòghan did. He was bigger than her, stronger than her, and she reveled in that. Her body opened in invitation and he took it. From his kisses she knew that he'd be a demanding lover. Wrapping her legs around him, she attempted to show him that she could take whatever he dished out. Somewhere along the way she'd gotten caught up. They'd both gotten caught up and if he hadn't of pulled back, they would've been the proud parents of a bouncing baby in nine months. Not having been sexually active since her last complete physical, which had been damn near six months ago, she wasn't on any type of contraceptive. Being that Eòghan was wearing nothing but his skin, she was sure that he didn't have any contraceptives on his fine, fine person. And the man looked the picture of virility, like he'd produce multiple babies every time.

When he'd pulled away at first she was hurt, and embarrassed, and angry. A long while later when she'd finally calmed down, she got up the

courage to look at him without wanting to stab him. It was then that she noticed that he was fighting the same struggle. All of the mad had gone out of her and she knew that she had to do something to get them back where they were. Not that she didn't want to jump his fine bones, but she was glad that one of them had had the foresight to pull back. She knew that she was clean and though Eòghan looked healthy as a horse, looks could be deceiving. Still, she was grateful that he'd pulled back. Touching him was out since she was still coming like crazy so she was forced to use words. Girding her loins she told him that his hat was a'ight. And that had made it better. Her Eòghan was back and the next thing she knew, she was wrapped in his strong arms and she was drifting off to sleep.

Tinashe ground her pussy against the fingers that were buried deep inside her creaming center. Reaching a hand back and feeling the thick strands of hair belonging to her dream lover she pulled him closer. Oh yeah, she loved the feel of being in arms so strong. She felt the stubble of her dream lover when he pushed his face into her sensitive neck and whispered something to her in a lyrical language. She couldn't understand what her dream lover was saying but as long as he continued to move those thick fingers in and out of her pussy in such exquisite rhythm and nibbling on her neck like she was his last meal, she didn't care what he was saying. It had been so long, so, so long since she'd had a lover imaginary or real so she was reveling in the way that her dream lover was turning her on so damn good.

"More," she demanded huskily right before she lapsed into a chorus of pleases. "Please, please, please, please, please."

She felt her dream laugh into her skin right before he started smirking. She didn't have to look back to know that he was smirking – she just *knew*. She'd take him to task later but right now when he was complying so damn well, all she could do was moan out her pleasure and after two years of drought, she couldn't pretend that her dream lover wasn't doing the damn thing. When he bit down on her shoulder she was two seconds away from smacking him, dream lover or not, but then he added his thumb to his

pussy play and that shut her the fuck up. Now he had two fingers sinking into her creaming sheath and his thumb would circle her straining clit, and she was on the verge of the kind of orgasms you only read about in Camille Anthony and Aliyah Burke books. Tinashe smiled and moaned her approval as she felt her climax beginning to gather within her. Right there, right there, just a little more, she chanted ... and then instead of hearing the scream that she was sure she was about to emit, she heard Abeni's hyped-up on something that was loaded with sugar voice.

"Get up, Tina-she! Get up. Eòghan said that I could drive the boat back to their place. Come on, come on, come on. And if we hurry we might get to see the dolphins again! Woo hoo!"

Regardless of the risk it would pose to her deposit, she was going to kill Abeni. Just as soon as ...agh, this orgasm broke over her. She was sure that she screamed, one of those never-ending screams that caused one to lose their voice, but not one sound spilled out. Her dream lover caught the sound of his orgasm within his mouth. Oh yes! Yes! Yes! Yes! She shouted into his mouth as he continued to work her pussy like voguers worked a Madonna song. She couldn't tell Abeni to get the fuck out, she couldn't move to get up and throw something (like a flamethrower) at her, all she could do was lie in her dream lover's arms and surrender to the orgasm that had overtaken her body. When her orgasm was over he didn't stop; he simply grabbed her hair, took her lips, and grinded his big, hard cock into her pussy, starting another orgasm and triggering an avalanche of cum. Goodness, she'd just had one of the hardest orgasms she'd ever experienced and her dream lover already had her primed and wanting more. She was so close, so close, so close to getting him when Abeni's voice once again broke into her euphoria.

"Hi Coinneach, bye Coinneach," Abeni said before loudly slamming the door.

At Abeni's words three thoughts popped into Tinashe's head. First, she was definitely going to kill Abeni. Second, oh my damn, she was making out with that surly ass Coinneach. And, last, after she killed Abeni she was going to bring her back to life and kill her again for interrupting them. Coinneach might be a surly ass bastard but he had a big cock, full lips, and

talented fingers ... and he knew how to use all of them. Fuck, she hated to get up but she knew Abeni. If she wasn't downstairs ready to set out on Abeni's idea of a good time, Abeni would come back in there and make her day miserable until she caved and gave in to what she wanted. Fuck. *Did, she mention that she was going to kill Abeni?*

Coinneach woke to the smell and feel of a tempting woman. He'd had this dream hundreds, nay thousands of times before and just as he did every, single time he gave into the dream. He always thought that if he pleased the unseen woman better, his curse would be broken. This time, his dream woman was different. She was lush; she was wetter; she was more tempting. She called to him, beckoned him to taste her, to feel her, to possess her. And Coinneach came. He held his dream in his arms and crushed her softness to his chest. He held her so tightly that their bodies were melded together so naught but the tiniest smidgen of air was between them. He nipped at her skin, marking her so that she would know that she was his. He fisted his hands in her hair using it like the strings of a marionette to direct her in the way he wanted her to go. He thrust a questing finger into her center looking for her moisture for he was a man dying from thirst ... and loneliness. He was a man driven by desperation and she was his hope.

He was so caught up in loving her that he lost his bearings. He did not know what or when or where. He only knew her ... the feel of her (silk) ... the taste of her (honey) ... the smell of her (temptation). He wanted, he needed, he took ... and surprisingly she demanded. *More*, she demanded. Please, she begged. And he complied.

Feeling her fall apart around his fingers brought out the laughter that had been locked inside of him for so long, too long. Hearing her sing her pleasure brought out his usual smirk. Feeling her want him, sensing her desperation brought out his beast and the beast wanted to claim her, mark her so he bit her. And after he bit her he brought her closer to orgasm.

Somewhere he heard a noise but he quickly dismissed it for it was female. He scented another male but the male did not approach so he

wasn't driven to kill. He returned his full attention back to his female who'd tensed. He sincerely hoped that she didn't think that she was escaping him. No, not this time. She was his. Holding her more tightly against him, he redoubled his efforts and tripled them, then quadrupled them and continued to increase them exponentially until she surrendered her tight rein on her body and succumbed to his expertise. He caught the sounds of her pleasure in his mouth, jealous of even the earth hearing the song that his woman sung for him. Still, that was not enough. Turning her on her back, he ground his hardness into her, letting her feel his cock, making her crazy from want. He was going to take her. Finally, he was going to complete this union ... and then a shrill voice jumped into his fantasy greeting him.

That voice brought three thoughts to his head. First, he was going to kill his brother for not keeping a tighter rein on Abeni. Second, he had come close to mating with the surly Tinashe. Third, he was going to kill Eòghan and possibly lightly maim Abeni for interrupting the most intense interaction he'd ever experienced. Tinashe might be a surly harpy but he was going to make love to her. *Did he mention that he was going to kill Eòghan?*

"She really likes him," Abeni whispered.

Eòghan turned his head to look at his most favorite companion. For a moment, he was distracted by how cute she looked with her propeller beanie perched atop her curls. He was about to ask exactly whom she was when his delightful Abeni continued to speak.

"It's pretty obvious that Coinneach is into Tinashe. Hey, you know what? We could be their matchmakers!" Abeni announced happily as she clapped her hands together with the ever present grin spread over her beautiful face.

"They do have very similar personalities..." Eòghan admitted slowly.

"Yep, they're both surly bastards," Abeni said as she clutched one of his arms in her hands as she practically jumped up and down in her seat.

"There is that," he conceded.

"Coinneach's not into any weird sex shit is he?" Abeni asked seriously.

Okay, he wasn't expecting that question; still he shook his head no as he responded. "I don't think so. Why is Tinashe into weird sex shit?"

That question earned him a slap on the arm. Apparently it was okay for Abeni to suggest that Tinashe was something less than a saint, but no one else.

"Not unless you think being a hatermonger of fun is a sex game," she said.

That comment practically had him roaring with laughter. It wasn't often that one could work the term 'hatermonger' into general conversation, yet somehow his Abeni had. What made it extra hilarious is that Abeni didn't try to be funny or try to impress him with her unusual vocabulary selection; she was simply like that. Still, it cracked him up.

"Now if you're finished laughing your fine ass off, follow my lead, okay?"

"Um," he began only to be interrupted by Abeni.

"We'll get these two hooked up if it's the last thing we do!" Abeni whispered excitedly.

Eòghan simply nodded knowing that there were few things that he could ever deny his lovely Abeni.

Eòghan vowed never to take his woman's comments at face value ever again. When Abeni had told him to just 'follow her lead' he'd merely thought that she would invent ways to throw his brother and her sister together – but oh no, not his woman. Instead of doing the obvious she did the complete opposite. That is instead of throwing them together, she did everything in her power to keep Coinneach and Tinashe away from each other.

Of course, that was no easy feat considering that the four of them were sightseeing together but Abeni pulled off 'Operation Surly Bastard Blue Balls' –as she'd coined it- with panache. Whenever it looked like Tinashe

and Coinneach were about to have a private moment Abeni would interrupt loudly and drag her sister away from Coinneach. Eòghan wouldn't have believed it could work but it was and that fact was only verified Coinneach stomped over to where he sat and threatened him.

"I know you like her little brother but I'm close to strangling her," Coinneach growled angrily. Eòghan, who was perched on one of the beach's rocky outcroppings, pulled his eyes away from a laughing Abeni who was pointing out something to a scowling Tinashe.

"And what has earned your ire this beautiful morning, Coinneach?" Eòghan asked innocently.

"Your little friend over there," Coinneach nodded his head in Abeni's direction.

"You dare speak ill of my woman?" Eòghan asked his brother feeling some ire of his own seeping into his veins at his brother's tone.

"Nay..." Coinneach said frustration evident in his movements and tone.

Eòghan watched as Coinneach raked one of his hands through his hair. It was clear that Coinneach was agitated and for a moment Eòghan felt a flashing twinge of guilt over goading his big brother. He was about to calm him when Coinneach spoke.

"I just wanted to spend some time with the surly one is all."

From anyone else that was just a sentence but from Coinneach it was a huge admission as Coinneach had shut off his need for companionship long ago. For too long Coinneach had spent Freedom Week holed up in their cave growing surlier by the month. And he'd had many, many months to witness this- two thousand seven hundred of them to be exact. So instead of admitting to Coinneach what Abeni's true intent was, Eòghan stifled his grin and gathered himself before speaking. He was sure to keep his eyes averted knowing that his mirth and pleasure at Coinneach's confession would be evident in his eyes. Instead of looking at his brother he kept his eyes trained on his woman and her sister noting that Tinashe looked like she was contemplating doing Abeni some kind of physical injury.

"Are we not spending time with them now?" Eòghan asked with as much restraint as he could muster.

"Alone is what I mean, Eòghan," Coinneach said dryly.

"Oh ... right," was all that Eòghan could think up in response.

"Eòghan! The seals and dolphins are back! Come and look!" Abeni's voice carried on the cool breeze.

Both brothers stood at the same time.

"We best hurry the women along, Eòghan. I can feel a storm brewing," Coinneach said.

Yeah, a storm is brewing but which do you mean ... the one that Nature is bringing or the one in your pants? Eòghan wondered silently as they moved to join the sisters on the rocks near the water's edge.

They say that there are times when an animal can only think of the basest things, such as sex and food. Though humans were in the Animal Kingdom, for some reason Tinashe had always considered their placement there to be a technicality. Ah, but she now knew better because right now in spite of the storm brewing, she could only think of one thing: killing Abeni so that she could fuck Coinneach. If Abeni pulled her away from Coinneach one more time, she was not going to be responsible. Nuh huh, no way, no how.

Though it'd been a long time since she'd last been intimate, she was glad that their mother had thrown a box of condoms into their luggage. Though she wondered what her momma had thought she needed with a box of seventy-two condoms, she was now grateful for her foresight. And she was grateful that she'd remembered to pack the box in her backpack because she definitely planned on fucking Coinneach and using at least thirty-six of the seventy-two. She was only using half since she had to share with Abeni.

Tinashe wondered if it would be morally wrong to pay Eòghan to drag Abeni off and pleasure her so that she could score some alone time with his surly, hot ass brother. Probably not but she bet their Momma would have a

thing or a two million squared to say about that. And then there was their Daddy. Yeah, maybe she should find another way to score alone time with Coinneach that didn't involve their Daddy putting a hit out on Eòghan. After all, it wasn't Eòghan's fault that Abeni was, well Abeni.

She knew that Eòghan had a thing for Abeni, yet he wasn't doing shit to show it. Dammit, he needed to step up his game. Paying him to pleasure Abeni might be morally wrong but giving him some pointers was okay. Turning her back on Abeni she marched right over to the two brothers and got right in Eòghan's face.

"A disproportionate amount of Abeni's porn stash involves an alpha male domming his woman. Being that the average male in the United States is 5'9.2" and Abeni's 6'1" the chances of her running into a man bigger then her are low and even smaller when you take out the men who are related to us. Take out the men who are assholes and the slim pickings get even slimmer. Then throw out the men who'd kick Abeni over a cliff two seconds after meeting her and that pretty much leaves you, Eòghan. Abeni is hella intelligent, good looking, and she's related to me so in spite of her being spawn, she's not all bad. And she has sensitive breasts, so either piss or get off of the pot," she said before she took Coinneach's hand and marched off in the opposite direction of Abeni.

Coinneach didn't know where Tinashe was dragging him and he didn't care. Still a storm was brewing and he had to get them inside before the skies opened up. He was about to speak when his person was unceremoniously slammed against the stone of the cliff. Before he could speak Tinashe had thrust her tongue into his mouth, her hands into his hair and thrust her body against his. Oh, fuck. Tearing his mouth away from hers with great reluctance, he growled his next words.

"Get to the boat or I'm going to take you right here, Woman."

"And that would be bad, why?" Tinashe asked with a hand on her curvaceous hip.

“Because there’s getting ready to be a storm and I don’t want any other male to see my stuff,” he answered as his hands roamed down the silky curves of his stuff.

“Fine, then, take us to your batcave because I need room to have my way with you,” she said as she ambled her beautiful self away from him.

“Woman, I’ve told you before, we doona’ have bats,” he muttered before falling prey to the hypnotic swing of her hips and ass.

Eòghan was getting ready to fill Abeni in on how well her plan was working when Tinashe came up and dropped her little bomb. After that, all he could think about was domming Abeni. His Abeni liked it rough. Damn, it just so happened that his greatest fantasy was to find a woman that he could totally let go with – physically and emotionally. Marching up to Abeni, he tossed her over his shoulder and made his way to the boat. He didn’t trust himself to speak. Hell, right now he could barely walk his cock was so hard. Placing the squirming Abeni in the boat next to Tinashe, he joined his brother up front. Making sure that they’d finished closing their life vests, he gave Coinneach the signal to go. A second later, Coinneach revved the powerful engine of their Baja 278 Performance speed boat letting the 600 HP Mercury engine do its thing.

They made it to the cave just in time to avoid the torrential downpour. From the looks of things the storm wasn’t going anywhere in a hurry. Glad that they’d had the foresight to inform the hotel owners not to expect them for the next few days, they didn’t have to worry about the proprietors calling out a search party for them.

Just as before, both Abeni and Tinashe had gasped when they entered the chamber room. They put their jealousy to be loved by these men on hold as they paid homage to Nature. The cave was beauty, raw beauty, unmatched by almost wonder that they’d seen.

“You have a beautiful home,” they both whispered simultaneously.

“Thank you,” the brothers both answered before gathering them in their strong embraces.

They remained that way for countless moments before finally making their way into the section of the cave that led into Coinneach’s and Eòghan’s living quarters. Reaching the threshold, the men picked their women up and carried them to their separate bedrooms.

Coinneach set Tinashe on the bed and backed away before she could pull him down. He’d been hot for her since sometime last night when he’d taken her in his arms. The moment that their skin had touched something in him had broken or maybe, just maybe something in him had been repaired. He’d reveled in the feel of her softness molded to his hardness. The scent of her femaleness had filled his nostrils until he couldn’t recall any other smell. Holding her had changed him. Hope, forgiveness, and raw need, had replaced the molten anger that had slowly consumed him over the years that had grown increasingly bleak. After spending today with her Coinneach knew that along with those other emotions another had filled him: love. He loved Tinashe. And not just her body, which was always covered with too many clothes, but her feistiness, her intelligence, the way she protected her sister, the way she cussed him out. Though he wanted nothing more than to throw her down and take her, he had a duty to tell her about what he was.

Leaning against the wall he looked at the woman that had somehow become the manifestation of all of his hopes and dreams. Wait, that wasn’t true. He’d stopped hoping centuries ago and though he dreamed, nothing in his imagination could ever conjure such a beautiful answer to all that his soul craved. Tinashe wasn’t simply a hope or a dream. Tinashe was his *Ùrnaigh* (prayer). She was a prayer that he hadn’t realized he’d prayed being that he’d spent the last century not talking to God. Even though he’d turned his back on God, it seemed that God hadn’t let him go.

His musings were interrupted by Tinashe’s voice.

“Coinneach?”

He knew his name was a question on her lips.

“Tinashe, let me have a moment. I want nothing more than to be inside of you but first, I have to tell you about me so you can be sure that I am the man that you want.”

It physically hurt him to say the words but they were words that needed to be said for he never wanted half-truths or lies between them.

“Okay,” she said softly. “But don’t tell me standing across the room. Tell me while you’re sitting beside me,” she demanded.

“What I have to tell you is important and I don’t know if I can sit beside you and not touch,” he admitted.

When Coinneach sat her on his bed everything in her screamed YES! Finally, she was going to get the chance to have her way with this motherfucker. Even though they’d spent the day playing babysitter to Abeni and Eòghan, Coinneach had managed to not only turn her on but keep her turned on all day. Now that they’d finally scored some alone time she was puzzled when he backed off. When she’d called out his name she didn’t expect for him to respond as he had, but then when did Coinneach do anything that she expected?

Though she hadn’t known him long she knew a few things about him. For all the surly bastards that he was truthful - *even though he better keep that truth to himself if it pertained talking junk about Abeni*. From the way that he treated his brother she also knew that he was loyal, had a strong sense of family, and had more patience than he gave himself credit for. Abeni might work her last nerve but she was pretty sure that she’d have straight out maimed Eòghan if she’d had the misfortune of having him as a brother. Coinneach was also something else. A surly, hot-tempered, demanding bastard, Coinneach was unapologetically male. She hadn’t missed the way that he always placed himself closest to danger or the way that he simply grabbed her hand when they crossed streets or rough terrain, or even the way he shortened his strides so that she wouldn’t have to increase her speed.

Ever since he'd damn near dissected the Orkneys looking for her grown ass sister, she'd been noticing Mr. Coinneach Francisco Stiùbhart. Hell, how could she not notice him? He'd left no rock unturned in their search for her sister and his brother. When they couldn't locate them, he'd been just as upset and instead of telling her that her sister was just as much at fault as his brother, he'd reassured her and finally pledged to her that though Eòghan was rash, that he would do no harm to Abeni. Though she'd been raised to doubt everything, especially the intentions of men, she'd also been shown countless examples of stellar men. True, they were all related to her by either blood or trust, still, Coinneach fit right into that category.

Tinashe knew three things in that moment. One, Coinneach wanted her judging from the way his cock damn near burst from his jeans. Two, whatever Coinneach had to tell her was a heavy burden judging from the uncertainty in his eyes and the stiffness of his posture. Three, she was going to listen to what he had to say and regardless of how hard the truth, she wasn't going to turn her back on him and she wasn't going to let him continue to carry his burden alone. Depending on what he said she may have to kill him, but she'd be there for him as she clubbed him to death ... if it came to that.

Knowing that she needed to be comfortable for whatever it was that Coinneach was going to tell her, she sat up on the bed. Stepping out of her boots, she then stripped down to her 'walking around the house' outfit, which consisted of Carolina t-shirt and panties. It wasn't sexy but it was comfortable and from the way Coinneach's eyes blazed when he glimpsed her body, it was as good as any skimpy lingerie she owned, which was pretty much, none. Making a mental note to invest in some lingerie for him, she reached out to him and invited him to her side.

"Come to me Coinneach and let me help you carry your burden," she said.

Coinneach had no intentions of going anywhere near her until he told her his secret. And when she started stripping he'd unconsciously backed further away from the temptation of the beautiful skin that she was

revealing in increments. His body was already roaring demands and when she shrugged out of her boots and socks revealing beautiful feet with toenails painted the color of Scotland's sky his cock twitched. When she shrugged out of her jacket and stripped down to her t-shirt, his cock sang. Dammit, a t-shirt wasn't supposed to be sexy but Tinashe in a t-shirt was nothing short of temptation. His thoughts were distracted when she shimmied out of her jeans. When her thick, muscular legs that seemed to have no end, came into view, his cock roared. Damn, damn, damn. Tinashe had to cover herself up and he had to stay as far away as possible or he'd lose any vestige of control that he had.

Sorting that in his head he pressed himself into the cave wall and thought of the icy waters surrounding the Orkneys. He was leaning against the wall so hard that he was sure that there would be a permanent indent of his body pressed into the cave wall. Still, he pressed himself further into the wall hoping for another millimeter of space between him and Tinashe. He wanted this woman more than he wanted anything but dammit honor demanded that he tell her who and what he was and let her decide if she wanted him or not. Dragging in a deep breath he was preparing to speak when she opened her arms to him and asked him to give her some of his burden he was lost.

Seeing the truth in her eyes, he stripped down to nothing. He didn't remove all of his clothes because he was sure that she would accept him. He stripped down to nothing because it was fitting. Plenty of people had seen his flesh just as plenty of people had seen his temper, loyalty, respect and his family had been privileged to glimpse the softer bits of his demeanor but no one had seen all of him. He'd never revealed the things that had hurt him; he'd never revealed his fears, his failures, or shortcomings. His default setting was that of an invincible man. Even in the presence of God he'd pretended to be invincible, unmovable, unfeeling, but in this moment, he was going to expose himself fully to Tinashe.

Walking over to the bed, he fell to his knees in front of her and allowed himself to be embraced. Putting his head in her lap he poured out his heart omitting nothing, abbreviating nothing, censoring nothing. His heart had

skipped a beat when he felt her stiffen but being that she didn't let go of him or stop looking him in the eye, he continued speaking until there were no more words in him.

Tinashe was surprised when Coinneach stripped down to nothing. Taking several moments to quiet her demanding pussy, she kept her arms open. When he walked to her and dropped to his knees she put her arms around him in a fierce embrace knowing that Coinneach probably hadn't allowed himself to be comforted in a long, long time. Gently placing a kiss on his lips, she wiggled further back on the bed and dragged him with her. Something about Coinneach on his knees bothered her. Once Coinneach was lying beside her on the massive bed, she felt better. And once he began his confession, she was bothered but she didn't look away or let go. She simply held him tighter and encouraged him to continue.

When Coinneach fell silent, he also physically withdrew from her. His eyes still blazed with passion and his cock was still poking at her (even though they were inches apart) so she knew that he still wanted her. In that moment she knew that Coinneach expected her to reject him. Well, he could expect all the fuck he wanted but there was no way in hell that she'd reject him for being a loving brother and a decent man.

Jumping to a sitting position she straddled a surprised Coinneach. Damn he felt so good ... and he looked so scared. In an effort to get herself together she took a deep breath. It didn't work. She was still pissed on Coinneach's behalf. And she still wanted to fuck this motherfucker raw, but that would have to wait. First, she had something to say to Coinneach.

"You're a beautiful man Coinneach Francisco Stiùbhart. I am so proud of you, Coinneach. You looked after your brother and you did all within your power to help Nanihi even though you didn't even know her. I wish more men were like you – not the surly bastard part, but the good, decent man part. Second, if you ever again even intimate that you're not a good man, I'm going to spank your ass - and not in a good way so get that fucking smirk off of your face. Third, I understand that a virile man such as yourself is accustomed to having many women but now that you belong to

me, that shit ends now. As fine as you are, I'm not risking getting some kind of STD* from you."

She was about to continue her spiel about STDs and women when Coinneach rolled her beneath him. The feel of his delicious body pressing into hers made her go instantly wet. Instinctively, she arched into him before making herself back off. As much as she wanted him, she had to finish this discussion.

"Tinashe, there has been no one else for a long, long time," Coinneach whispered.

"Yeah, but some diseases take months to show up she began."

"There hasn't been anyone else in decades, Tinashe and only sporadically in the whole of the last century," he finished.

"What?!" she asked.

"As the years went by I grew angrier and angrier. The angrier that I became the more difficult it was for me to sustain an erection."

"But you've been hard practically the whole time I've known you. Granted, it hasn't been long, but damn."

"The world was full of women but none of them were you, Tinashe," he whispered.

"Coinneach, oh Coinneach," she whispered back.

"Tinashe, I don't know if I can have a normal life."

"And you assume that I have a normal life now?" she asked. "You've met Abeni. What do you think the rest of my family's like?"

"I don't even know if I can give you children," he said.

"Yeah, but we do know that you can't give me an STD so shut up and fuck me, Coinneach. We have the rest of our lives to figure this out," she said as she pressed her body up into his.

Coinneach couldn't stop the smile that spread throughout his body upon hearing Tinashe's words. He wanted to say more but his woman was making demands. She was a surly something he thought as he pressed his weight into her softness. Though his body was roaring at him he took his time. It had been decades since he'd had the pleasure of a woman's body beneath his and it had been the whole of his life since he'd ever shared lovemaking with a woman that he intended to keep. Ignoring her sharp nails and the way she thrust her tempting body into his, he took his time and feasted on her mouth. Tinashe tasted like the strawberries and peaches that she'd been munching on throughout the day. He'd never been much of a fruit eater, but being that they tasted so good from his woman's mouth he might have to begin.

Linking his left hand with her right, he used his right hand to caress her hot, silken skin. Though he should've grasped both hands he needed to feel at least one of her hands on him. Every scrape of her nails, every impatient tug, every demanding touch only served to spur him on. Tinashe affected him in a way that tested everything that he'd ever thought about women, about lovemaking, about himself. This moment wasn't about him simply reaching sexual release or giving her sexual gratification. This moment was about all of the other moments that they would share as a couple.

Though he wanted to rush he forced himself to be patient. Taking his time he reluctantly pulled away from her mouth. His tongue immediately protested at being separated from its treat but when he latched onto the smooth skin of her collarbone it sighed in ecstasy. He licked his way down ignoring her demands but loving the way that his name sounded on her lips.

"Coinneach," she breathed.

"Hush *Ùrnaigh*," he whispered huskily as he continued to discover all of the tastes that made up his woman. The sweetness of the hollow of her neck and the hollows of her clavicle tempted him. He tasted every bit of the skin between her lips and breasts. When he got to her breasts he stopped as his hands were busy playing with the bountiful mounds that overflowed his hands. He savored the scent of his *Ùrnaigh* knowing that he was a slave to his woman's pleasure.

He nipped at the delicate areoles as he palmed the sensitive flesh. Cupping her left breast he opened his mouth and sucked it into his mouth while using his free hand to pleasure the right breast. He took his time tasting her breasts and only after insuring that he gave each equal attention did he move on.

Motivated by the thrum of his name on her lips, Coinneach made his way to her sex. Inhaling the scent of her desire, he buried his tongue deep inside her creamy pussy. Taking his time he lapped her pink core drawing forth her nectar. When the first drop hit his tongue he knew that this was his ambrosia. Taking his time he drank from her refreshing himself at the altar of her womanhood. He could have spent the rest of his life there and perhaps he would've if not for Tinashe pulling at him so desperately. Feeling the sting of his follicles being pulled forcefully from his scalp only added to his throbbing hard-on and reluctantly he removed his lips and tasted his way back to her lips.

“Coinneach, fuck me now!” she demanded.

Smiling at her, he caught her demand in his mouth and rammed every inch of his hard cock into her tightness. Once inside of her he could no longer deny his body what it wanted. The knowledge that she wanted him as much as he wanted her gave him broke his control and he thundered into her never slowing his speed. He held nothing back and on every stroke he bottomed out. Over and over he stroked into her. It was a hard ride but Tinashe had dug her claws into his shoulders, wrapped her long legs around him and spurred him on with her husky demands and beautiful sounds of pleasure. So he rode Tinashe harder than he'd ever ridden any horse, harder than he'd ridden the waves of all of the world's waters, and even harder than he'd ridden his anger into the abyss that had been his life before he'd met this woman. He rode past the quakes that signaled her orgasm and continued riding even as they grew stronger in magnitude and longer in duration. Knowing that he was giving her pleasure he rode past the last two hundred twenty-five years of anguish, anger and pain. Looking down he saw the wonder in her eyes and it was then that he realized that he'd been running.

Something about the way that she looked at him changed him. Taking her lips again in a kiss he poured all that he had into it. His strokes never ceased nor did they gentle and he was still running, but this time he wasn't running from his past but to his future. And before he could think another thought his future told him that she loved him. For a moment Coinneach thought that he had died for he felt the same way that he had the moment he was cursed by his ancestor, but this was different, better. His ears thundered with the sound of his name being screamed over and over; his eyes were full of the most beautiful anything that he'd ever set his eyes upon; his body was on fire with want; and his heart damn near burst from the emotions pouring out of her into him. He could feel her pleasure and her pleasure on top of his burst the dam inside of him and he came. His release poured out of him like the waters that poured from Victoria Falls. Feeling both he and Tinashe's orgasms he now understood why the local people referred to it as "*Mosi-oa-Tunya*" (the smoke that thunders), but not even the 1708 meter width of Victoria Falls or the 550,000 cubic meters of water that plunged over the Falls each minute could compare to the wonder of his *Ùrnaigh*.

Tinashe wasn't a virgin but she had never had a man make love to her like Coinneach was making love to her. He loved her with everything – with his eyes, his nose, his lips and tongue, his hands, his soul. He showed her everything in his eyes – his want, his need, his vulnerability. He used his nose to smell her. Never would she have thought that a man sniffing her would turn her on so good but when Coinneach did it she felt ... claimed. He used his lips and tongue to taste her and in turn he devoured her like she was his favorite treat. He reached out with his soul and touched hers. The touch felt like sunshine pouring into her body and even though he rode her hard she knew that every time he touched her or looked at her he did so with reverence. Before she could stop herself she said the one thing to him that she'd never said to any man. She told him that she loved him ... and she meant it.

"Wrap your legs around me," Eòghan demanded as he made his way to his bedroom.

Once there he kicked the bedroom door closed and without missing a stride or setting her down. He daren't put her down for she might do something foolish such as try and run from him. Though his cock got even harder at the thought of playing 'chase' with her, knowing Abeni she was crafty enough, fast enough and strong enough to give him a real workout before he caught her. Right now he needed her too badly to engage in that particular fantasy so he'd save that game for later.

"Kiss me," he ordered. Yes, ordered; not asked.

Abeni looked like she was about to argue but he merely threw an *'I'm about to fuck you so hard you'll come for days'* look at her. He suspected she'd appreciate that look and when he caught the scent of her arousal he knew she did. Ah, her surly sister was right; his Abeni did like to be dommed and he was just the man to do it. In fact, he'd be the only man doing it from now on ... or there were going to be some dead, fucking men filling the waters in and about the Scotland.

Pushing her up against the door he pressed his body into Abeni's making sure to let her feel the hard on that she'd caused him ... the hard on that had been present since that first moment.

"Kiss me," he said again.

The defiant tilt of Abeni's head alerted him to the fact that there was about to be a disagreement.

"Look dude," Abeni began.

Thrusting a hand into Abeni's hair he gripped a good handful and pulled. Abeni gasped at the roughness of his gesture but as he slammed his mouth down to cover hers he felt her thighs tighten around his hips. He smirked on the inside and continued to grind his hard cock into her jean-covered pussy.

Eòghan's kiss was rough yet it was full of love. Feeling Abeni try to pull back, he tightened his hold on her.

"Be still," he growled as he slapped her ass.

Abeni felt her body humming with excitement at Eòghan's rough handling of her. The authority in his voice when he demanded that she kiss him turned her on so good. Few men were truly gifted in the art of domination but as Abeni was coming to realize Eòghan was most definitely a talented, talented man.

"*Mo Dhachaidh*," he growled into her ear as he grinded his hard body into her.

Abeni couldn't hold back her gasp. He was working her body so good, so good, so good, still she wasn't so far gone that Eòghan's words snuck past her. He spoke in Gaelic not English, but being that her daddy spoke Gaelic - albeit a different dialect - she spoke it too. In fact, she spoke Gaelic as well as she dot-dashed. That is why she understood Eòghan's words meant but she wondered if he'd own up to them.

"What does that mean?" she asked.

She watched as Eòghan pulled back a bit and looked into her face.

"My home," he answered softly before dipping his head and nipping at her sensitive throat.

Abeni blinked rapidly and tried to clear the sting of tears sprang to her eyes. Oh Wow! Her pussy screamed at that announcement knowing that Eòghan didn't say those words lightly. As easygoing as he was she knew that he meant every word that he said.

She didn't even realize that Eòghan had moved away from the door until she felt the softness of the mattress. Eòghan's bed was huge ... and high off the ground. If he hadn't placed her on the bed she would've needed to use the steps to get to it. Taking a moment to look around she noted that though Eòghan's room was not particularly tidy (not that hers was either) his massive bed was decadent ... and dressed in MIT red. The room said typical man but the bed screamed passion. If ever a piece of furniture was a complete fucking turn on, this bed was it.

Placed in the middle of the room, the bed was nothing short of a blatant invitation to sex. The deep, polished dark wood was set off by an ornately-carved headboard was the centerpiece of not only the bed but the entire room. Thick Pillows were thrown here and there and his sheets spilled over the bed like a silken waterfall. Though the bedroom didn't have a particular scent, Eòghan's unique scent permeated the bed. His scent evoked images of hot, delicious sex ... dominating sex.

She didn't realize that she'd closed her eyes until she'd opened them and saw Eòghan looking at her. No, he wasn't merely looking at her he was stalking her with his eyes. His eyes were heavy with desire. Lust wafted off of him in waves. He was more intense than she'd ever seen him and all of that intensity was focused on her. Everything about him turned her on to the point that she simply wanted to simply peel her clothes off and assume the position. Hell, who was she kidding? She wanted to assume any position that involved him using that incredible body to dominate her. Though he said nothing his hypnotic gaze got to her. Before she could stop herself she'd thrown her tennis shoes across the room along with her jacket. She was fumbling with her shirt trying to get it off but suddenly her progress was hampered by Eòghan who pushed her hands away. Slapping his hands away, she attempted to finish undressing only to have him take her hands in his. Abeni was tired of his interference. When she attempted to shake off his hold Eòghan merely tightened his hold. She could've easily broken his hold, but she wasn't sure that she wanted to.

"What the fuck is your problem?" she fairly snarled.

Yeah, she snarled, dammit. So what? She was allowed. She didn't have time for manners. She wanted him too bad to insert any kind of civility in her tone.

"That is for me to enjoy, *Mo Dhachaidh*," he responded with a growl of his own.

"Well hurry the fuck up--," she began before Eòghan placed a long, thick finger against her lips.

Abeni countered that maneuver to shut her up by sucking his thick digit into her mouth.

Eòghan gasped right before issuing a demand. "Harder."

Abeni's eyes widened at his imperious tone but she did as she was instructed and sucked harder.

Something within Eòghan protested when Abeni started removing her own clothes. That was his treat dammit. Pushing her hands away, he was surprised when she slapped his hands away and returned to her task. Oh, he was going to have to punish her. Taking her hands in his, he immediately knew from her look that Abeni could break his hold should she choose to. Just as he knew that she could break his hold he was sure that she knew that his strength was greater. The fact that she didn't use her skill to break her hold and the fact that he didn't exert pressure said a lot about both of them. The fact that she stood down said that she welcomed his domination and the fact that he allowed her the choice said that though he was a demanding lover that he dommed with gentleness instead of force.

Hearing Abeni's frustration had him smiling inwardly. His Abeni's passion matched his own. The fact that she didn't try and hide it turned him on immensely. When she sucked his finger into her mouth it took every bit of patience he had to remain standing. Instead of throwing his woman down on his bed and fucking her right then and there, he simply demanded that she suck harder. When she complied he couldn't hold back his moan.

Eòghan allowed Abeni to continue sucking for a few moments before he pulled his finger away from the temptation of her mouth. Damn, she was good. Soon, he'd have her sucking his cock like that but first he'd take her pussy. But before that he had to tell her who and what he was. Kicking off his athletic shoes he stripped off his shirt and joined her on the bed. As much as he wanted her Abeni deserved the truth. He'd give it to her, but he wasn't going to make it easy for her to leave him.

Lying down next to her he removed the shirt that was giving her such trouble. Tossing it across the room he growled upon seeing her skimpy, red

bra. Palming both breasts he noted with pleasure that they were bigger than his hands. Plumping them up before pushing them together he dipped his head and suckled them through her bra. Her moans spurred him on. He would've continued suckling until he brought her to orgasm but he knew once she peaked, he'd be powerless to stop. Rolling onto his back he rolled her atop him.

"What, why did you stop?" she asked disjointedly.

"I had to. Abeni, I have to tell you something," he said as he locked one of his heavy, muscular legs around hers.

"It better be something along the lines of you fucking me all night long," she said.

"If you still want me to after I finish speaking then I shall fuck you all week long," he said.

"Let me up, Eòghan. I want to be in a good position in case I need to kick your fine ass," she stated.

Reluctantly he let her up, but he didn't let her out of his bed.

"Speak," she demanded. Gone was his playful Abeni and in her place was a woman who took no shit.

Taking her hands, he was surprised when she shook off his hold. At first he was hurt by her actions but then she spoke. "You can hold one hand. I need the other hand free in case I need to hit you."

His woman was so feisty. "Do you have a preference for which hand I hold?" he asked.

"Doesn't matter. I can kick just as much ass with either hand. Take the one you're scared will do the most damage to you if it makes you feel better," she said.

Yep, feisty. "Well in that case, I'd need to take both. Something tells me not to underestimate you," he purred as he took her right hand.

"That something would be right. Now talk. And I'm telling you right now if the words '*baby momma*', '*STD*', '*circus animals*', '*genocide*', or the

phrase '*I used to be a woman*' come out of your mouth, I am straight whipping your ass. And you better not have a wife especially after rubbing that big cock of yours all up on me and calling me your home!"

"Abeni, I would not even think to disrespect you like that. As beautiful as you are if I had a wife I'd be with her. And if any woman had my baby, she'd also be my wife. I've never had an STD or killed off masses of people and I don't even know where the hell genocide or circus animals came from in your little list. And you've felt my cock so you know that I'm all man."

Looking into her eyes he prefaced his tale with a warning. "Abeni, you may feel differently about me once I finish. I will give you space and time to calm down if that is what you need, but I will not let you go without a fight. I hope you understand that," he said launching into his tale before she could interject. Eòghan didn't know why he'd tried that cheap move but it sure as shit didn't work. Abeni interrupted even before he was finished his warning.

"I hope you understand that you may lose that fight," she said.

"No, Abeni. I won't lose not when the prize means everything to me."

He'd thought that he was his usual even-keeled self but as he glimpsed the expressions that flashed across Abeni's face he realized that his temper had come out. *Fuck*. He'd meant to remain even-keeled, but Abeni took his power. With everyone else – including his surly brother - Eòghan was the unflappable, easygoing nice guy. All rules were out when it came to Abeni. Though he found himself laughing a lot while in her company, the beast was close to the surface, lurking ... waiting ... to protect his woman from danger and from other males that got too close. Abeni of course didn't see the danger or the males, but the other males saw him and when they saw 6'8" 255 pounds of snarling Scot, they knew not to approach. Abeni may have been unaware that she belonged to him, but every male they came across knew ... and soon she would too.

Abeni was taken aback at Eòghan's demeanor. One moment he was demanding that she suck his finger harder, the next moment he was stripping her and suckling her to the brink of orgasm and then he freaking

stops. Not only did he stop, he gave her the ‘we need to talk’ line, which was like an ocean of cold water on her fresh hairdo. All he needed was the funky horror movie soundtrack music to complete things. She liked Eòghan, dammit. Okay, fine she more than liked him and he had to go and fuck it up. At least he’d told her before things went further than they had.

Fuck that. If she was going to suffer without him, he was going to be limping for the rest of his short life because if this fine motherfucker had a wife, a baby momma or had a past life as Caligula she was calling her daddy ... and her uncles, and all of her male cousins. But first, she might have to call Teijana to steal some of his DNA and grow a clone of him in her secret lab ... for purely research purposes, of course.

It pissed her off to think that Eòghan might’ve done something that would lead to her beating him senseless or having to put a hit out on him. She was doing a good job of hardening her heart to him but then that fine motherfucker had to go and remind her how much man he was and he touched her. It was only hand-holding but dammit that still constituted touching. And then he had to go all crazed, hot, dominating male on her. Abeni didn’t know what to expect from *this* Eòghan. This Eòghan was worlds apart from the joking and sensitive Eòghan. That Eòghan she could control. This particular Eòghan however was pure alpha. He was raw, edgy, and rough and she didn’t have a hope in hell of controlling him. But she didn’t want to control him, not after he indicated that she was everything to him. Eòghan didn’t say it pretty. No, he practically growled it. He didn’t raise his voice, but he didn’t have to. His low, gravelly voice sent shivers up her spine. Despite her shivers she wasn’t scared; she was turned the fuck on. She caused Eòghan to lose all of his cool ... and this Eòghan was all hers! Before she could jump on him and ride him into the sunset she had to hear what was bothering him and then she had to destroy it. Anything that messed with her family had to die.

“Tell your tale, Eòghan,” she demanded as she faced him knowing that whatever it was she wasn’t going anywhere.

Yes, tell your tale. If they hurried, they could have a St. Patrick's Day baby – the MacCadáins were potent like that. She wondered if green food color in milk would hurt her baby.

Eòghan had no intention of letting Abeni go, regardless of what he'd told her. Abeni was his. Holding her hand wasn't enough. Yanking her into his lap, he was surprised when she let him. Looking into her eyes Eòghan told his story. Or at least he tried to. Abeni kept interrupting. Who knew that one woman could ask *why*, *what*, and *how come* so many damn times in a single minute? When he got to the part about Nanihi, she went ballistic and wondered if some friend of hers could invent a time machine and go back and kill him. He'd had to skip forward in his story and tell her what had become of Nanihi and then he had to listen to Abeni gush over how cool that chick was. When she asked if his Uncle Ra'd was one of those fine, hot-blooded exotic men he'd got a little heated about that.

Telling her about the curse had her raving mad. Never take candy or offers of immortality from strangers she'd warned him. That was right before she asked him how much immortal pussy he'd indulged in over the centuries. Right after that she asked him if he was impervious to STDs. Once he'd informed her that he was, she didn't even let him finish the rest of his tale. She toppled him to the bed and slowly worked his jeans off. That done she stripped out of hers like she was trying to set a new world record before climbing atop Eòghan.

Abeni couldn't believe that that's all that had been worrying Eòghan. Though she was pissed at his fucking ancestors, she was so glad that he was here. Now that she didn't have to worry about having to settle for a clone of him she was finally going to have her way with him.

Abeni's greatest sexual fantasy involved being completely dommed by a man like Eòghan. With approximately 6'8" of smoking hot man all she had to do was lay back and let him take her and as tempting as that was, something told her that right now he needed loving. Before he could counter her moves, she toppled him to his back and straddled him.

For a moment she didn't do anything. She simply looked at the expanse of good man beneath her. Taking her time she took her eyes on the spectacular journey of the man that was Eòghan Francisco Stiùbhart. His thick sheaf of sable hair spilled out onto the silken pillows and over the sides of the bed. His strange purple-blue-green-gold-colored eyes held stories that should be bound in old leather and stored in the Reading Room at the Library of Congress. His prominent nose and strong jaw line were combined to make a magnificent skyline of the man. His thick neck led to a body that she likened to the Grand Canyon. That is, it was wild, full of sharp ridges and hard planes and unparalleled beauty. And after she spent countless moments simply looking she reached out and spent more moments touching all of the places that her eyes had been. Glad that her momma had insisted that she take care of her hands, she was confident that her touches were soft. Willing herself to be patient she inserted gentleness into each caress.

After she was done touching with her hands, she tasted with her mouth. Eòghan tasted like all of the wild places she'd been in reality and those she could only visit in her daydreams. He tasted of sea salt and sunshine; summer and spring; exhilaration and adventure; freedom and beauty. Because she had a skilled palate she also tasted the traces of imprisonment that he hid well behind his easygoingness just as her sharp eyes had caught the little bit of surrender underneath the hope his hypnotic eyes projected.

Oh, Eòghan, she whispered. *Oh, Eòghan*, she prayed as she used her body to heal him. With her love she broke him free from the shackles of trickery. With her tenaciousness she beat at the surrender that had tried for centuries to overtake him. Raising her hips she settled her sex over his and slowly sank down upon the throne of her destiny. When she was fully-seated she gasped at the pleasure. The pleasure wasn't simply physical; the pleasure was all-encompassing and touched every part of her. And wouldn't you know it? Eòghan was a perfect fit ... and she was never letting him go.

Eòghan had the kind of beauty that you didn't need to look at to see. You just felt his beauty as it was such an integral part of him. It was there

in the strength in his hands, the knowledge in his eyes, the warmth of his soul, the beat of his heart.

Closing her eyes she stretched out over him and laid her head over his heart. She remained quiet while she picked up the beat of his heart and the natural rhythm of his body. She could double dutch her ass of so she knew right when to jump in. And when she did she removed her hands from his heart and linked her fingers with his. Eyes still closed she spoke not knowing who she was addressing only that she meant every word.

“Let him go. You’ve had him long enough. I’m not asking; I am telling. Let him go for he belongs to me and thus I will fight for him. Even when existence itself ceases I will continue to fight for this man for he is my destiny and I am his,” she said as she stroked Eòghan with her commitment. Feeling his body respond to hers she opened herself to him and cradled his surrender.

Eòghan wasn’t expecting Abeni to push him onto his back. He expected her to lay back and allow him to conquer her like the conquistador-Highlander that he was. But just as he’d been shown countless times since setting eyes on her, Abeni rarely did what he expected. She didn’t wait for him to conquer her; she marched straight in and conquered him ... along with everything from which he needed to be delivered.

She didn’t even conquer like he expected. She didn’t use stealth; she simply called him out. When he met her on the battlefield she didn’t blink, she merely conquered him with a finesse that should be trademarked. She brought him to the battlefield with her summons. She brought him to his knees with her understanding. Abeni understood him even when he didn’t understand himself. Acceptance spilled from her lips and love poured from her body.

She looked at him and saw all of him ... and was not afraid. She touched him and touched every part of him ... and for once he was not afraid. Then she loved him ... and he was lost. All he could do was surrender everything he had to this woman –his trust, his love, his orgasm. It wasn’t much, but it was all he had and he laid it all at her feet.

The thing about magic is that it is, well magic. Even time passes differently when it interacts with magic. And that is why magic is only wielded by those that God has entrusted with it. It is a powerful, powerful thing. And though it surrounds humans, few humans are aware of its presence. That is why they miss most of the beauty and majesty that surrounds them, and thusly why humans are able to sully the earth, themselves, and even lovemaking.

Magic is the reason that neither couple could keep track of time. Then again, they'd been so wrapped up in each other that they would be hard-pressed to notice anything other than the feel, taste, and scent of their other halves. And make no mistake about it - Abeni was Eòghan's destined half just as Coinneach was Tinashe's destined half. Even so, Fate had a funny sense of humor. Fate enjoyed a little comedy too and sometimes it was simply too difficult not to throw stuff – such as words, situations, and challenges – at humans and watch them dance.

Abeni and Tinashe were fully human and being that it was well past the end of the seventh day both Eòghan and Coinneach were once again fully human. Making sure that none of the humans were aware of the time was critical. The couples needed this time to connect. This was the space where couples learned to trust each other and regardless of how different each individual was, trust was the one issue that none of them would compromise on.

And though Abeni and Tinashe thought that they had it all together they didn't. Brilliant both of them had desires yet neither of them had ever had them met. While the seemingly carefree Abeni craved domination, the hardass Tinashe craved gentleness. It wasn't that either of them had a past filled with abusive men (*like Aodhfhionn Patrick MacCadaín would stand for that*); it was that their lives were saturated with so many positive males – that grizzled old bastard that they called their father chief amongst them. So many males lived their lives and never learned how important male role models were for girls but the men in their family knew that and thus made a point to always treat their wives and daughters with the utmost respect.

Consequently, both women wanted what their parents and their many aunts and uncles had ... and anything less was unacceptable.

Chapter Five: *Shorin* (kata) (Quick Movement emphasizing speed)

Meeting in the kitchen the sister's were frantic. "Oh shit, we totally have to go, chick. We have just enough time to trek back to Castle Balfour, pack up our shit and make it to the airport and home, otherwise Daddy and all the Uncles will come tear Scotland up. And we do NOT want that," Tinashe said.

"You ain't never lied," Abeni responded.

"Okay, what about the guys. I don't know about your man, but nothing I do will rouse Coinneach's fine ass. He's in there snoring his fine, fine, fine, did I mention fine, ass off. What about Eòghan?" Tinashe asked.

"Same," she said with a grin.

"We need to write this day down. We literally fucked those men into a sleep coma," Tinashe said as she pumped her fist à la Tiger Woods coming roaring down the back nine on Sunday wearing the red shirt with a three-stroke lead.

"We're coming back, right?" Abeni asked.

"Damn skippy we are, but we need to get a move on, or we're going to be late and we've already missed our first two windows."

"Okay, but we need to leave a note," Abeni said.

"Hurry it up, chick," Tinashe said as she headed for the exit.

"Okay, I'll just leave my propeller beanie on the counter. Are you going to leave anything?"

"Yeah, here, put this next to your hat," she said as she tossed her Bremont BC-S1 watch to Abeni. "We don't have much time. Now let's go."

"Done, let me just get this," Abeni said as she hefted Eòghan's conquistador hat.

"Abeni, there is no way in hell that you're going to get that on the plane."

"I'm not trying to get it on the plane. I'm simply hiding it," she said as she put it in the crisper drawer of the fridge and ran after her.

The next few hours were jam-packed as they made their way back, showered, re-dressed, packed, called their momma and boarded the plane. And all of this was completed in record time. By the time the stewardess handed them some lukewarm soda, they were exhausted. Their exhaustion didn't have as much to do with their mad dash to the airport as it did with several lovemaking-filled days.

"So what the fuck was the hiding Eòghan's hat about?" Tinashe asked as she slipped Coinneach's black cable knit sweater over her head.

"I don't want him wearing it for some other woman," Abeni admitted as she did the same with the too big rugby shirt that she'd filched from Eòghan.

"Wow, so you're going to be all like crazy, stalker girlfriend, huh?" Tinashe asked.

"Yep, and then one day crazy, stalker wife," Abeni said.

"Did you propose yet?" Tinashe asked.

"I fucked the man into a sleep coma, that's as good as any proposal," Abeni huffed. "Did you propose yet?"

"I didn't stab him even after he mistook Duke University for the University of North Carolina. And like you, I fucked him into a love coma. That's all of the proposal he's getting and if he wants to act the damn fool, I'll simply tell Daddy that he took advantage of me and then he can see how he likes being almost dead until Daddy gets around to outright killing him," Tinashe huffed.

"Wow, Coinneach and Eòghan are like so lucky to have us," Abeni said with a smile.

"Damn skippy," Tinashe smiled back. "I can't wait for the next three weeks to go by. My pussy is still singing Coinneach's praises."

Coinneach woke up from the deepest sleep that he could ever recall experiencing. All he knew that last night, he'd gone to sleep with the

woman that he loved above all others in his arms and this morning he was still in the mortal realm. He didn't have to check; he knew. He could feel ... everything unlike when he had crossed over into the immortal realm. Going into the adjacent bath, he took care of his needs before heading off to the kitchen to find the only woman that could ever be his *Ùrnaigh* (prayer).

Across the cave Eòghan was doing the same. Having woken from a deep sleep, he was excited at the prospect of dragging his beautiful Abeni back to bed. He was mortal again, which meant that Abeni was his! His! His! His! Going to the bathroom to take care of his needs, he hurried off to the kitchen to *Mo Dhachaidh* (his home), to Abeni.

When Coinneach and Eòghan spotted each other in the kitchen, they walked to each other and embraced.

"Ach, brother. It's been so long. So long. I am truly sorry for all of the trouble," Eòghan started.

Coinneach cut off his apology. It wasn't needed and it had led him to this moment. "No, brother. T'is I who am sorry for being such a surly bastard for these past centuries. We have our mortality back and good women. Let us be happy in our present and let the past remain in the past."

"Agreed," Eòghan said. "Let's find our women, feed them and drag them back to bed."

"Sounds like a plan," Coinneach agreed. "Where did those women get to?"

"Probably in the chamber room admiring the stones," Eòghan answered.

Two minutes later, two extremely worried Scots sat down at the kitchen table and called Balfour Castle only to be informed that the Misses Harper-MacCáin had both checked out and been driven to the airport. At that news the good-natured Eòghan lost all of his good nature and slammed down the phone while Coinneach who in his long life hadn't cried enough tears to fill a thimble, turned his head away to hide the river of tears that fell from his eyes.

Coinneach didn't need to hide his tears for Eòghan had seen them and those tears filled Eòghan with a cold, cold rage. Letting Coinneach go to the refuge of his room, Eòghan did nothing at first. Being hasty is what had gotten them into their original mess. Looking on the counter he spied Abeni's propeller beanie hat along with Tinashe's watch, but no note, no nothing. Taking a deep breath, he opened the cutlery drawer and pulled out the packet bearing everything that they'd need for life in the twenty-first century. Until now, neither he nor Coinneach had even glanced at the papers as neither of them had wanted to glimpse the life that was denied them. Included amongst the papers were passports, banking accounts, and property deeds. It was all there including the name of the butler that they weren't aware that they had. It seemed that they were wealthy men ... wealthy, *unmarried* men, he amended.

Abeni could leave him if she wanted to, but dammit if her surly ass sister was going to have her way with his brother, break his heart and leave like it was nothing. Abeni and her surly ass sister had picked the wrong man to fuck with. He was a Scotsman with conquistador blood pumping through his veins. He conquered, he fought, he won. Going to his room, he looked around for his conquistador hat figuring that he should be wearing it as he plotted the best way to conquer two stubborn ass women. Not finding it, he growled knowing that Abeni had something to do with that. He hoped that she didn't think that ridiculous propeller beanie was an even trade for his conquistador hat.

Oh, he was going to let Abeni off the hook and leave her be if she'd simply help 'convince' Tinashe that she would be better served being Coinneach's wife then being kidnapped and being held hostage until he could find a priest to marry them so that the children that his brother impregnated her with wouldn't be born out of wedlock. And knowing Coinneach, there would be plenty of children. He hadn't missed the longing in Coinneach's eyes when they passed families. Eòghan was determined to fix this. Coinneach deserved to be happy so he went about his way, pretending that he would let Abeni go all the while knowing that that was nothing short of a damn lie. He was never letting Abeni go. Never.

Picking up the phone, he used some of his wealth to make arrangements. House opened, personal attendant notified, tickets and hotel room, and car reserved, he bellowed for Coinneach.

“Coinneach!”

Just as he expected, that particular call had his brother running. Coinneach looked like he was fine and if one didn’t look into his eyes and see the anguish there, one could believe that. He however was Coinneach’s brother and he knew that Coinneach wasn’t alright. But he soon would be.

“That wench stole my conquistador hat and I intend to get it back. I’ve already made arrangements.”

Before Coinneach could ask anything, he threw him the packet of papers and headed out of the cave knowing full well that Coinneach would follow.

Tinashe sat down on the built-in seat of the deck and watched the party in full swing. Their little cookout wasn’t meant to be an all-out party but as usual, whenever someone in Patrale fired up the grill, a party was bound to break out. Their parents had decided that they just had to cookout despite it being the same temperature as the surface of the sun to celebrate both her and Abeni’s return home. Both she and Abeni had gotten jobs at the prestigious Emory University. There were strong Emory ties here in the suburb of Patrale. Many of the residents had sent their children to Emory or worked at Emory, including Blitz Forrester-Altenöder whose parents were their next-door neighbors. She couldn’t help but smile watching Blitz’s husband, Wulf. It was clear that even after a handful of years, that he still wasn’t accustomed to Georgia’s heat ... and neither were his fine ass triplet brothers. Smiling, she wondered how Coinneach and Eóghan would handle the heat being that they would be residing in Atlanta. Full stop. She liked Scotland but it was too damn cold and too damn far away from her beloved Atlanta. Atlanta got in one’s blood and stayed there.

Hearing Abeni dot-dash cuss someone out, she shook her head knowing that she’d better get over there and help her sister out. Finishing off of her glass of peach iced tea, she strolled over and added her own bit of dot-

dashing. Spelling out ‘don’t make me tell our daddy,’ she laughed as the guys paled. Even thirty years their daddy’s junior, the men were still scared of him ... as they should be especially when their surly ass uncles were also in attendance. Retired Admiral Aodhfionn Patrick MacCadáin had trained most of the guys littering her backyard. Though retired, they still came to him for advice, for a refresher course, and of course to get their daughter’s trained. Nothing was scarier than a Navy Seal who had a daughter.

Linking an arm through Abeni’s she asked, “Okay, being that you all are obviously beaten, let me spell out the terms of your surrender to my good sister. First, I’m going to need to be hearing some apologies ... with the quickness. Second, that’s pretty much it, so get to apologizing,” she said.

The apologies were quickly delivered amongst much laughter. Those guys might be some of the most badass men who walked the planet but they were goofballs and total hams. She smiled when two of the biggest men put their arms around her and Abeni and begged them to put in a good word to Nanny Harper so that they’d get more of her famous dirt cake. Looking over at Abeni, they both broke out in laughter and silently mouthed ‘twenty days’. Twenty days and they’d be back in the Orkneys with their men. They still hadn’t told their Momma about the men they loved being somewhat immortal but they’d cross that bridge when they came to it. Right now, they were going to enjoy the day. After all it was an unusually cool ninety-two degrees.

At 6’2 1/2” in her stocking feet, Ngozi Harper-MacCadáin was accustomed to towering over most men. And at a solid, one hundred sixty pounds with dark, coffee-colored skin, gold-colored eyes, of mouthwatering t and a, she was accustomed to men staring ... even white men. Being in the south, however having two white men at her door that towered over and stared at her like they were wondering if they could take her in a fight, should’ve given her pause and it might have if she a) didn’t have that fifth degree black belt and passed the rigorous hand-to-hand combat training that the men in the neighborhood had demanded that all of the girls receive; b) been married to a lesser man; c) been somewhere other than

Patrale, GA; and, d) hadn't had a yard full of mean motherfuckers just waiting for a reason to bring some heat.

Being that neither of the men had spoken, she cleared her throat and was about to begin speaking when she heard her husband's footfalls behind her.

"You want to tell me why you boys came here to die?" Aodhfionn asked as he lightly pulled her hair back and kissed her mouth before embracing her.

As always, whenever her man touched her she reacted. It didn't matter that they'd been married for over three decades just as it didn't matter to her husband that she wasn't as thin as she was back then or that her thick tresses were streaked with grey or that she had stretch marks from carrying his six children. Thinking of her set of quad boys made her want to slap him, but being that she could feel his dick pressing into her back, she'd save that for the bedroom.

Hearing the young men speak snapped her back to attention.

"Um, sir we didn't come here to die," the tallest one stated.

"Then you'd best get your eyeballs off of my wife," her husband growled.

"Aodhfionn, stop it. Be nice," she warned.

"I am being nice. Notice how I haven't ripped their heads from their bodies yet, *mo chuisle* (my heart)?"

"I did notice that, baby and I thank you but don't you think it best to find out what they want before you kill them or maim them in some way?" she soothed.

Though Aodhfionn was fifty-five years old, he still cut a fine figure and he was still intimidating as hell. Standing 6'10 ¾" and having the body to match that height, his temper was still more imposing than even his stature. He was a '*beat the fucking shit out of them now, then have your seven crazy ass brothers come and beat the shit out of them later, and fuck the questions*' type of man. Of course it had served them well being an interracial couple in the south. No one fucked with them MacCadáin boys

or anyone that they loved, full fucking stop. Their children had always been protected as had she.

“Well, what is it that you be wantin’?” Aodhfionn demanded.

She could hear the Irish coming out in him even though he still touched her with extreme gentleness.

“We would like to see Tinashe and Abeni if we might?” the tallest one answered.

“For what do you need to be seein’ my babies for, Scottish?”

Ah, the boys were Scottish. Being that her girls had just returned from Scotland there could only be one reason why these boys were here. They were the reasons for the ridiculous smiles on her babies’ faces. And being that they’d followed her girls all the way to Georgia in June, she was fixing to need a mother of the brides outfit. Oh yeah. But before there could be a wedding she had to insure that her husband didn’t kill them.

“Baby,” she turned in his arms and pulled his head down. “Let’s let the girls’ friends see them. There’s a yard full of trained killers outside to see to their welfare,” she purred.

“But I’m right here. I can see to it myself.”

“Well, there is that but if you don’t want to sneak in the pantry for a few minutes, I understand. I am getting older and all,” she said.

“Woman, you know good and damn well what you do to me, so stop that,” her husband said.

He sounded stern but she noticed that he didn’t let her go.

“Come then,” he directed the boys after slamming the door shut. They quickly made their way out to the backyard ... and that is when all hell broke loose.

Though Coinneach was devastated about Tinashe dumping him, he held it together for his brother. Eòghan needed Abeni and Coinneach was going to do all in his power to insure that that happened. At first, he planned to simply snatch Abeni from the doorstep but when the door opened and the

beautiful woman answered, he'd almost been too shocked to form words. Fuck, Tinashe hadn't been lying when she'd said that her mother was a supermodel. She had to be mid-fifties but damn, she was still quite beautiful. He'd been stunned stupid by her beauty that is until the grizzled, surly bastard walked up behind her and threw out a threat to him and his brother. It wasn't that he was scared of tussling with the older man; it was that he didn't want to. He had that *'by any means necessary'* look about him and right now Coinneach wasn't interested in a fight. He could not believe that Tinashe had described her father as 'gentle'. It was a good thing that her mother was present, else he was sure that neither he nor Eòghan would've gotten over the threshold. Hell, their dad was such a mean bastard, he wasn't sure that they would've made it onto the front porch. At the way he was looking, they might've gotten run out of town via shotgun brigade. *Was it just him or did Eòghan also hear banjo music?*

Eòghan was glad to see Coinneach perk up. Though he'd planned to do all of the talking, Coinneach's swagger had returned and he'd quickly stepped back into his role of big brother, which was fine by him being that the look of steel had returned to his eyes replacing the despondency that had previously taken up residence there. He was antsy when they'd driven up the winding driveway of the beautiful brick home with the towering columns and first and second story porches that ran the length of the front of the house. When the door opened he was wondering if he'd simply bust in, club their women over the head and make off with them ... that is, until he got a good glimpse at the man who accompanied the beautiful woman who was obviously Abeni's mother to the door. He'd thought Coinneach was a surly bastard but that's only because he hadn't met Abeni's father. That man may be past his prime, but there was no mistaking what he was: danger just waiting to be unleashed.

Eòghan was sure that he was ogling but he couldn't help it. It wasn't simply because Abeni's father was unmistakably Irish and his wife was African-American. It wasn't even the fact that Abeni's father was the surliest man that he'd ever crossed path with. It was the fact that the man

had eyes that freaked him out. Abeni's father had two different colored eyes. One was a startling green and the other was gold – not brown, not amber, but gold. The eyes may've been different colors, but both of them shot warnings at him. Still, when the dude said to follow him, Eòghan hopped to it.

After seeing Abeni dad, he had to nix the idea of clubbing the women over the head and making off with them. He might be foreign, but he wasn't stupid. *Was it just him or did Coinneach hear banjo music too?*

Despite the near hundred-degree heat, the coldness that emanated from Abeni's father caused him to shiver. Still, when the man ordered them to follow him, he hopped to it. After all, he was leading them closer to their women. And that was a good thing ... for both of them. The day had started off like shit, but now that they were here, it could only get better. Eòghan was smiling right until he saw those motherfuckers with their hands on his woman - his woman who wasn't wearing nearly enough clothes to suit him. Before he had time to even give reason a chance, he let loose his inner conquistador and ran over to his woman. Snatching a startled Abeni out from the clutches of the men who were wanting to die, he set her down a safe distance from the men.

At fifty-five years old, Aodhfionn Patrick MacCadáin had heard himself described in many ways. Most of the descriptors had to do with his physical stature, but after people got to know him, the descriptors moved from the physical to his demeanor. Whereas those who didn't know him well were intimidated by his size, those that did know him knew that it wasn't his size that they needed to be wary of, but his temper. Aodhfionn was aptly named. His first name meant 'white fire'; his last name meant 'little battle'.

The youngest of not one, but two sets of quads, he descended from a long line of fighting motherfuckers. Like all of the men in his line he was the gentlest of men with those he loved, but he was an unyielding, relentless, dangerous motherfucker to any and all who threatened those he loved ... regardless of such things as categories. Oh, he'd never hit a woman, but that's why he had female cousins. He'd yet to stumble across a MacCadáin

female who didn't possess what his mother-in-law referred to as the '*fuck a motherfucker up*' gene. Though that gene was prevalent in his family, it had mutated in him and his brothers.

Instead of a '*fuck a motherfucker up*' gene; they had a '*wipe that bastard from the face of the earth*' gene. And that's just what he'd do to any person threatening his family ... especially his woman and his baby girls. Oh, he loved his set of quad sons, but they were men. And yes, his woman and his baby girls were well-versed in the art of fighting, but they wouldn't be doing any or entire countries would be laid to waste. That's how he rolled.

The two boys at his door reminded him a lot of himself thirty years ago. They had that same desperation in their eyes. Judging by the fact that they'd chased his baby girls all the way from Scotland, they'd better be coming bearing marriage proposals. Anything else would get them boys hurt ... hurt real bad.

Ngozi must've felt him tense for she reached up and stroked his face before kissing him. Looking down into her eyes he couldn't imagine life without her. She'd been worth every sacrifice that he'd had to make. As always, thinking of their union took him back to the time when he'd first laid eyes on her.

Though he'd married Ngozi in the seventies, he wasn't blind to the prejudice that surrounded them or to the disapproval with which many viewed their marriage. Ngozi had been a junior at the prestigious Spelman College when he'd spotted her at Piedmont Park during a jog with his roommate, Andronikos Jones, during weekend liberty. Though he hailed from a small town in the Seacoast area of New Hampshire, a lifelong sailor, he'd gone straight into the Naval Academy.

As soon as he spotted Ngozi Harper he knew that she was the one woman that God had created for him and him alone. None of their differences (racial, class) mattered nor did the fact that he didn't know a thing about her enter his head. Once he glimpsed her he simply had to approach her. Not having the time or patience for lengthy explanations, he'd left Andronikos and made his way over to her. Blocking her path, he introduced himself as her future husband. Ngozi had responded to his bold

declaration by hauling off and punching him in the face before following that up with punch to his ear when he'd doubled over from the first unexpected blow.

As he lay on the ground stunned at her skill and her beauty, he took a few precious moments to watch her strut her beautiful self away. No sooner had Andronikos helped him to his feet and handed him a towel for his bloodied nose, then he'd caught up with her. Praising her for her excellent technique, he'd changed tactics and asked to take her home, which she'd declined before he'd even finished the question. Not one to give up, he began talking about their future asking her what kind of house she wanted, where she wanted to live and the number of children she'd like to have with him. His beautiful, feisty Ngozi had responded to every one of his questions with silence. She didn't even bother to look at him while she shot him down though he noted that she was careful to keep both him and his roommate (who was sure to keep a decent distance away from his woman) within eyesight. It wasn't until she'd reached her black 1972 Pontiac Firebird Trans Am that she finally deigned to speak to him.

"Get in," she'd told him and Andronikos. "You're still bleeding, which means that there's a good chance that your nose is broken."

Ever the gentleman he offered to drive. Looking at him, she threw back her head and laughed heartily. Taking her laughter as a 'no' he waited until she slipped behind the wheel so that he might close her door.

"Don't bleed on anything," she ordered before zooming out of the lot like she was a stuntman for Hawaii Five-O.

And that had been the start of a beautiful, tumultuous relationship. She'd taken him to her parent's medical practice. Graduates of the prestigious Howard University College of Medicine, the Drs. Morgan and Etta Harper had one of the busiest practices in all of Atlanta. Dr. Etta Harper was a beautiful, soft-spoken, no-nonsense woman. Dr. Morgan Harper was a distinguished gentleman who reminded him of an up-and-coming actor Morgan Freeman who was an award-winning stage actor and had recently starred in the film *Who Says I can't Ride a Rainbow?* and more importantly played 'Easy Reader' on PBS's *The Electric Company*.

While setting his nose Dr. Etta Harper told off both him and Ngozi while Dr. Morgan Harper had simply sat back and congratulated Ngozi on her aim. By the way the big, gruff man hugged Ngozi he knew that his woman was spoiled.

It came as no surprise then when her parents had sent Ngozi out and had a private word with him. Their private word had been more like the Inquisition, except with imminently worse consequences. They'd fired off questions left, right and center. Her mother had ended the Inquisition with an invitation to church. Although she'd said it in a soft voice he knew a directive when he heard it. Though he would've liked nothing better than to attend, he could not. Even though he was a first-class midshipman and his company had won the title 'Color Company' for the last three years, he still had to adhere to regulations and regulations stated that he had to be back by Sunday evening. He had a duty to his company and to his future wife. Not that he would consider bringing dishonor on his Academy or himself but now that he'd found Ngozi he had to plan for his wife's future. Explaining that as a senior he was authorized an unlimited number of weekend liberties except for when he had military duties, he looked them in the eye and promised them that he'd marry Ngozi in their church and have each of their children baptized there as well.

His last two months at the Academy had been hell. He'd used every weekend liberty he was granted. If not for Andronikos and his brothers he would've killed himself. The drive from Annapolis to Atlanta was right at eleven hours. Leaving on Friday at one put them in Atlanta at twelve midnight. He'd grab a few hours of sleep and at six a.m. he'd be at Ngozi's door waiting to take her to breakfast before they spent the next few hours together. Because he couldn't attend services on Sunday as he had to be on the road by four p.m. to insure that he'd meet curfew, he either took her to services at a Seventh Day Adventist church or he arranged luncheon with Rev. Bailey, the pastor of her church, being that either he or his charismatic young son would be their officiate.

The fourth time that he'd made the trip from Atlanta only to spend a few hours with Ngozi, her father had warmed up to him and actually greeted

him. The fifth time that he'd made it the man had had their domestic set a place for him. The week after had been mid-term leave, which had been his first opportunity to actually attend services with their family. Rising for the meet and greet, he'd stated his name and proudly announced that he was here to prove to the Drs. Harper that he'd meant it when he said that he intended to marry Ngozi. When someone had yelled out if he thought that he was good enough for her, he'd said no, but that he was going to marry her anyway and hopes that God softened her heart and mind so that she'd be more amenable to the marriage. When he'd taken his seat to a smattering of chuckling and applause, he'd been surprised when her father had stuck out his hand to shake.

That afternoon her parents had announced that they were leaving for Savannah leaving him with a week alone with Ngozi. Her school was still in so he drove her to and from class, ate lunch with her and took her to dinner. In the evenings, he drove her home, checked to make sure all was well at her house then went outside where he spent the night in his car. It wasn't that he didn't have money for a hotel room; it was that he wanted to insure her safety and as much as he was tempted to stay in that house with her he knew that he couldn't be anywhere in the proximity of a bed and not have her. Sure people would probably understand if he consummated his relationship with Ngozi, but he couldn't until she was properly married. He'd shaken Dr. Harper's hand and that meant something to him especially as he knew that the man didn't give his trust lightly.

When he'd returned to Annapolis he was more invigorated then ever after having spent some quality time with Ngozi. Though she enjoyed his company she didn't forsake her studies because of his presence. She had been firm about the time that she was available to sight see and such and he hadn't pushed for more. Even with their limited time together, he'd learned a lot about his future wife including the fact that she didn't eat veins in chicken, frosting on cake or take ice in her water. A perfectionist, she was angry at herself for mucking up on a test, which resulted in her having a 3.95 GPA instead of a perfect 4.0. Though she could do long division in her head neither she nor her mother could cook worth beans although her mother made great iced tea.

That had been the most fun-filled week that he'd had. And you guessed it, he'd planned to make the trek two weeks later (he had watch duty the next weekend) but he received a call from Dr. Harper saying that from now on he'd drive Ngozi up. He'd hung up before he could even from a decent protest. Turns out, Dr. Harper knew that he'd slept outside the house in his car. For the next five weekends, the Drs. Harper brought Ngozi to the beautiful countryside town of Shawner, Virginia, where they spent time at the estate of the McDyess's with whom they were good friends. He'd offered to show them around the Academy but they'd declined saying that they didn't want his relationship to risk his career. He'd been pissed and ready to do something defiant but Dr. Harper, Mr. McDyess, and Dr. Fisk had sat him down and schooled him in the ways of the world. After the talk he was still angry but he saw the world a little bit different after that. Commencement came a few weeks later and as soon as the ceremony ended he grabbed Ngozi up in his arms and kissed her right there in front of all and sundry, the look on his face daring anyone to say anything about his choice. Later that day, they'd all flown to Atlanta where Rev. Bailey united him and Ngozi in holy matrimony.

That had been over thirty years ago. It had been quite a ride. And now he was certain that he was about to be in the same position of Dr. Morgan Harper. Tinashe and Abeni might be in their thirties and have doctorate degrees but they were still his baby's and if these boys thought they were going to come here and simply waltz out with them without proving their intent they were sadly mistaken. Aodhfionn was torn. He wanted the best for his baby girls yet he wasn't sure that these boys were it. Still pondering whether or not that he was going to beat the shit out of those boys, he walked out to the spacious back yard with a dangerous look on his face. His musings were interrupted by the battle cry of the two brothers.

Eòghan let loose a yell moments before his brother. He may've come to Atlanta on his brother's behalf, but that didn't mean that he was going to sit idly by and let some other man put his hands on Abeni, especially when she

still owed him a conquistador hat. Running up to the men who had his arm around her, he noted that Coinneach was right beside him.

“Take your hands off of my woman!” he yelled.

Tinashe was swallowing laughter when she heard the enraged yell. Reacting, she went to step in front of Abeni, but Abeni regardless of how clueless she acted was trained by the same daddy and uncles who’d trained her. Thus, Abeni stepped in front of her. But as quick as they both were they were not as quick as the Navy seals that partied in their backyard. Before she could move, she and Abeni were pushed to the ground, shielded by a wall of wily, ‘take-no-prisoners’ bastards. Hearing Coinneach’s voice, she attempted to get up only to have Abeni grab her leg and drag her back.

“That’s Coinneach,” she yelled.

“I know but if you get into that and get hit Coinneach is going to die. Come on,” she said as she crawled out from around the back.

Following Abeni, she crawled out the fracas only to run smack dab into their momma. Shit.

“And just where do you two think you’re going?” their momma asked.

“Um, over there,” she stammered. Dammit. She had a Ph.D. and was the author of several best-selling books yet her momma always turned into a stammering idiot.

“Momma, those men that daddy and his friends are going to kill are our friends,” Abeni whined.

“Really?” their momma drawled with a raised brow.

“Mo-mma,” Abeni whined.

“What am I going to get out of this?” their momma asked.

Wow. Their momma was straight running game on them.

“What do you want?” Tinashe asked suspiciously. Their momma might act flighty and spoiled but she had a D.D.S.

“I’ll let you know at a later date. Now come on,” she said as she took both of their hands and led them to the beautiful deck.

Loosing a sharp whistle, their momma got the attention of everyone.

“Okay, now settle down. Aodhfionn, call the dogs off. I don’t want any maiming or killing ... yet,” she said as she stepped down off of the deck.

As always when their momma spoke, people listened. She needn’t have said a thing for as soon as she stepped off of that deck, everyone stilled. It wasn’t simply her beauty or that badass way that she carried herself, it was the fact that she was the wife of Aodhfionn Patrick MacCadaín. And Aodhfionn Patrick MacCadaín, brother to seven other men who were just like him in temperament, mentor to the grip of trained men in the back yard, and either real uncle or play uncle to most of the thirty-somethings there, was death incarnate to anyone or anything that threatened his woman. Their daddy took the protection of his wife extremely seriously. Whenever he couldn’t be right by her side, one of their uncles was there in his absence. When their momma had gone on photo shoots, at least two of her uncles accompanied her. When their momma was pregnant and attending graduate school at Howard University’s College of Dentistry, his female cousins had moved in to help with their care. Their daddy was real particular about his woman and those who crossed Aodhfionn Patrick MacCadaín didn’t fare well.

“Daughters, come,” she demanded.

Tinashe and Abeni immediately stepped forward.

“Now does someone want to explain what’s going on?” she asked.

“Those are our friends, Momma,” Abeni said.

“Mmm hmm,” their momma said before turning to Eòghan and Coinneach.

“You boys want to tell me your side of the story?”

Coinneach listened to Mrs. MacCadáin speak. He couldn't help but admire the way that she commanded instant respect. Now he saw where Tinashe got it. Stepping forward, he was about to speak when Eòghan beat him to it. He watched in disbelief as his normally easygoing brother lost a hold on the last vestiges of his temper.

"Tinashe needs to do right by my brother. She's had her fun with him and then simply walked out with his heart!"

Coinneach was stunned at his brother's passion on his behalf. He could do no less than defend his brother with equal fervor.

"And Abeni needs to make amends to my brother as well and cease holding his armor for ransom," he added.

"You can go straight to hell Coinneach Francisco Stiùbhart! Like your shitty little hat is anywhere as cool as Abeni's beanie propeller and I know that you didn't just insinuate that my baby sister is a whore," Tinashe finished her statement by throwing a left hook right at Eòghan. She threw it at Eòghan because he wouldn't be expecting it and after having Abeni as a sister she knew that Abeni would be taking care of Coinneach for her.

At the same time Tinashe was doing damage to his brother, Abeni had jumped in his face. "I know that you didn't just insinuate that my baby sister used your brother, Eòghan About-to-get-his-ass-handed-to-him Francisco Stiùbhart!" Abeni yelled and punctuated her declaration by throwing a right cross into Coinneach's face.

Not sure why Abeni was hitting him when she was clearly addressing his brother Coinneach was staggered at the punch, yet he stood there and took it. He'd never hit a woman, period and neither would his brother. Still, he wasn't about to stand there and take rights and lefts to the face. Looking over at Eòghan, who was taking similar rights and left to the face from an equally-outraged Tinashe, he posed a question.

"Are you going to get your woman, brother?"

"Are you going to get yours because I'm a little tired of your woman's sharp tongue and heavy fists?"

Coinneach's heart stuttered for a moment. Eòghan spoke the truth. Regardless of how hard he pretended otherwise, Tinashe was his woman and if he had to chase that woman around the globe for the rest of his life he was going to do that.

"Let's trade places," Coinneach said as he did so. Catching Tinashe's fist in his hand, he yanked her to him and kissed her good and deep. Damn, never had anger tasted so good.

Eòghan knew that he should pay more attention to what was going on but it was all he could to restrain himself from pinning his feisty, conquistador-hat stealing woman. Eòghan sighed knowing that the trouble-making, getting-into-shit Abeni was his. She was his and woe to anyone trying to get in the way of that.

Catching Abeni in his arms he absorbed her blows simply glad that she was touching him. He loved this woman. He loved this woman. Oh, how he loved this woman.

Aodhfionn watched how the Scots boys reacted to his babies. Though his eyes were riveted to his baby girls he knew that a lot of eyes were on him. He was so proud of his baby girls. Just as beautiful as their mother, they had perfect fighting form. Even in raw anger they followed through on their punches, had great footwork and perfect aim ... just like their mother. The boys simply took the punches but he wondered how long it'd take them to realize that neither Tinashe nor Abeni would stop until they were good and damn ready. Pulling Ngozi behind him he waited to see how they'd handle his daughters. And though he stiffened - as did every other man in the vicinity - when they switched places and grabbed his baby girls up in a passionate embrace, he slipped the dagger he'd been holding back into its sheath when he saw Tinashe and Abeni kissing them back. Okay, he didn't need to see any more mauling of his babies.

"Scotland, I'm going to recommend that you remove your hands from my babies if you plan on keeping them," he growled.

He didn't realize that he'd been steadily moving forward until he felt Ngozi tug on his arm. She wrapped her arms around his waist, stood on tip toe and whispered in his ear. Of course he bent his head toward her to make her task a little easier.

"Don't you want me to be a grandmother? Wouldn't it be fun to hold some chubby dual-eyed grandbabies," she purred.

"Grandbabies would be fine as long as I didn't have to think about what those boys would have to be doing with my baby girls in order to get them, *mo chuisle*," he answered.

"Come on, baby. Wouldn't you like some grandbabies to spoil them senseless ... you know, like you did the girls?" she asked.

"I did no such thing. Neither Abeni nor Tinashe are the least bit spoiled," he countered with a frown. "In fact, they are probably under spoiled and need some additional spoiling to bring them up to speed."

"We won't get grandbabies any time soon if you kill those nice boys," she countered.

"Doesn't young Teijana have a secret lab? Why can't she make us some grandbabies in there?" he asked not caring in the least that he sounded sulky. Damn it, he was sulky. Tinashe and Abeni were his baby girls.

"I'm disappointed but since you're so traumatized by the thought of grandbabies, perhaps you should simply hold me to night instead of..." she began.

"Don't even think it, *mo chuisle*" he said as he turned and dragged her into his arms. He'd never get enough of this woman. Never.

"Send those kids on some fool's errand so that I can take you upstairs and punish you for even threatening such a thing," he demanded.

"And since when have you ever needed me to send anyone on a fool's errand to have your wicked way with me?" she asked while pressing her body into his.

Damn, his woman was going to kill him.

“Never,” he admitted as he walked her backwards. He kept walking her backwards until one of the patio tables until he came to the decorative stone that hid their sumptuous hot tub. Bending her over it, he ground himself into her and kissed her.

It wasn't until he heard his sons' groans that he even remembered that he had an audience. While everyone else was accustomed to his and Ngozi's passionate displays, their six children were still embarrassed by them. They could just get over that. Ngozi was his woman and this was their house.

“Baby, take me upstairs,” Ngozi whispered.

“Why?” Because our girls are over there loudly protesting that they're being subjected to eye trauma,” she laughed.

“Very well then. Send them on their errand and I'll take you upstairs and show you why you need to be glad you have me as a hus-.”

Before he could finish that sentence Ngozi hollered out her demands. “Abeni, Tinashe go to the guesthouse and get me some strawberries out of the freezer.”

“But there are fresh strawberries in the fridge,” Abeni protested.

“Yes, but I'm going to need those for when I take your father upstairs,” she countered, gasping as he kissed a trail up her neck.

“Oh my goodness! My ears are bleeding now. Are you happy, Abeni? You just had to say something,” he heard Tinashe complain.

“It's not my fault your mother is a freak,” Abeni countered.

“Why is she my mother when she's spread out under your father who won't keep his hands to himself?” Tinashe responded. “Let's just go before another of my senses is damaged.”

“Girls, take those ... oh yeah Aodhfionn, right there,” she paused to praise him as he continued nibbling on her ear. “Take ... yes, yes, yes ... those lovely young boys with you,” he heard his wife rush through the last bit of the sentence when he bit her earlobe.

“Momma,” both his daughters cried out.

“Don’t talk back to your mother,” he said being that Ngozi was too close to peaking to speak.

Snatching up his woman he headed for the house. He didn’t have to look back to know that Abeni and Tinashe were stalking across the yard dragging Scotland with them.

Abeni and Tinashe slap-boxed all the way to the truck. They also name called. Once they reached the truck they paused to throw a disgusted look at Coinneach and Eòghan.

“Get in the back. I know that you don’t think I’m going to let either of you drive my truck after coming here and starting trouble,” Tinashe growled before getting in one last lick.

Once they climbed inside of the spacious cab of the GMC Sierra Denali, they switched from slap-boxing to name-calling.

“Slut,” Tinashe yelled.

“Whore,” Abeni countered.

“Wait, why are we arguing with each other when we can totally blame those assholes in the backseat?” Tinashe asked.

“Yeah,” Abeni agreed before turning around to glare at the brothers. “You guys suck. Are you happy? You came all the way here and started trouble.”

“You left,” Eòghan accused.

“Yeah, otherwise I would’ve had my daddy and all of my uncles – you know most of the men in the backyard plus some more that you didn’t see – coming to Scotland and laying waste to it.”

“You left. And you didn’t even leave a note,” Eòghan said sullenly.

“I believe that I told you that I’d be back every three weeks. Remember that? It was somewhere between the fifth orgasm and the sixth orgasm, or

were you to overcome by my moves to remember anything but my name being that you were screaming it out so loud?" Abeni threw back.

"Ooooh, she told you," Tinashe said as she paused at the stop sign and gave her sister a high five. "Go Abeni, Go Abeni! Go Abeni!" she chanted and then laughed when Abeni broke down a truck version of the Harlem shake.

"And you took my hat!" Eòghan accused.

Tinashe bristled at Eòghan's accusatory tone. "Dude, I believe that I just told you about accusing my sister of stealing your stupid, little hat. If you need me to remind you I can stop this truck and beat your ass real quick."

"Yeah, tell him, Tinashe," Abeni said. "And I did not steal it. I merely hid it."

"For what reason?"

"Because I looked into my crystal ball and knew that you'd turn out to be an asshole," Abeni huffed.

"Are you going to tell me where it's at?"

"I'm not now," she said and turned around.

Coinneach closed his eyes and breathed in deeply. Watching Tinashe's ass sway as she stomped to the truck had his cock near bursting. He only listened with half an ear as she argued with her sister before telling off his brother. She was fierce and he couldn't wait to get all of that fierceness in a bed. There was no way that he was leaving America without a commitment from her just as there was no way that he was getting through the day without tasting her. She was his addiction and he'd been forced to go without her touch, her softness, her fire for too long. He didn't know where they were going but they needed to get there soon or he wouldn't be responsible for tearing up the inside of her truck because he planned on fucking her.

Feeling the truck come to a complete stop, he opened his eyes. It appeared that they were at another house in the same area. For some

reason he was under the impression that they were heading to a store named 'The Guesthouse', not going to an actual guesthouse being that they'd taken a vehicle to get there.

"Why is your parent's guest home so far from their actual house?" he asked.

"Because the guesthouse does not belong to our parents. It's like community property. All of the families in this neighborhood are tight. We keep the house up for when we have reunions, celebrations and the like. We also keep it stocked with meat from hunts, fresh-picked produce and canned goods," Tinashe answered as she entered the security code and walked in.

"Ah, that explains the many large freezers," he said as he walked past several stand up models lining the garage and the walls of the kitchen.

"No, that's for the bodies we have to hide," Tinashe teased.

"Have to hide a lot?" Coinneach asked.

"Not as many since we got the wood chipper," she responded as she went down the hall doing a visual check of the house, probably like her surly father had taught her.

Coinneach followed her in silence, his cock growing harder every second. He would've been fine if she'd been wearing something other than jean shorts and a sleeveless t-shirt. He could've acted like a gentleman instead of a Neanderthal if she'd simply stayed in the kitchen. But it wasn't to be, because she was wearing those too-short shorts and she was tempting him with that lovely ass. And the biggest mistake of all: she let him glimpse a bed ... and not just any bed but a king-sized bed made up like a crew from some interior decorating firm was going to bust in at any moment and do a photo shoot. He was sure the entire house was just as nice but he couldn't remember anything else but Tinashe. When she stepped foot into the room he'd followed her and kicked the door shut. He left the gentleman at the door so only the beast was left. Growling, he grabbed Tinashe to him and took her mouth in a kiss.

Tinashe's parents were freaks. There was simply no way around that. Her mother and father had never made a secret that they desired each other physically and though it made her want to vomit because it ruined her fantasies of being some kind of lab-created superhuman, she knew that she wanted her man to be as crazy about her as her daddy was about her momma. Still, she wished they'd keep that shit confined to their room or at the very least, the interior of the house. She shivered thinking of what they were doing right now. There was no fucking way that she was going back to that house anytime soon as there was no telling what they were up to now. When she was younger she'd thought that her father's first name was 'oh'.

Being that Abeni and Coinneach's asshole brother were still in the garage arguing, she'd gone on in not wanting to hear Eòghan get trounced in yet another exchange of words. Somewhere along the way, she'd gotten pissed. *How dare Coinneach look so fine? How dare he call her his woman and tell a fine, eligible man to get his hands off of her? How dare he stand there looking so unaffected when her pussy was calling out his name like that dude running down the street in Westside Story calling for Maria?* Putting a little extra shimmy in her hips as she did a visual inspection of the house even though the security system that Teijana had installed made such an inspection unnecessary. She was hot, wet, and there were five well-appointed bedrooms with king-sized beds just sitting there, empty and here she was all hot and bothered with almost seven feet of rock hard man just begging to be ridden like he was a ride at Six Flags.

She was all set to make her move on him when he grabbed her, kicked the door shut and taken her lips in one a kiss that rivaled photographer Alfred Eisenstaedt's 1945 snapshot of a sailor kissing a nurse at Times Square on V-J Day and photographer Robert Doisneau's 1950 "*The Kiss by the Hôtel de Ville*," taken in Paris. Oh wow, Coinneach could kiss, but dammit so could she. Tunneling her hands through his luxurious hair, she climbed his long, hard body confident that he could hold her. Feeling his big hands grip her ass like he was getting ready to knead dough had her rubbing herself against him frantically.

"Coinneach," she moaned his name into his mouth, scared to remove her mouth just in case he stopped using that wonderful tongue on her.

"Tinashe," he responded as he walked her to the bed and laid her down.

Sitting back on her elbows she watched as he removed his clothes. "Slowly, Coinneach. I want to savor this moment."

"Slow?" he fairly growled.

"Yes."

"Aye then, lass, slow t'is," he said as he sat on the chair and unlaced his boots and removed his socks before removing the rest of his clothes.

Coinneach rubbed her slowly through her clothes. Only when he'd gotten her good and worked up did he even attempt to undress her. Biting her lip, Tinashe watched her man as he slowly undressed her. Buttons and zippers being undone had never seemed like foreplay but somehow Coinneach made it so.

Every button revealed a sliver of skin that Coinneach worshipped with his lips, teeth and tongue. By the time Tinashe was completely naked beneath her man's big, hard body she was writhing and grinding into him. Though she tried to rush him the surly Scotsman took his time.

"Coinneach please..." Tinashe whispered as she ground her pussy against one of his muscled thighs.

She shuddered as the material of his jeans abraded her clit. Coinneach was torturing her. Yep, that's exactly what he was doing she decided as Coinneach laid his hard, naked body beside her and leisurely stroked her. She shuddered as he skimmed his fingers up and down her spine and over her ass before travelling upwards again. Gently turning her onto her stomach, he stroked the nape of her neck and whispered lyrical Gaelic in her ear before covering her with his body.

She loved the feel of so much man covering her. The fact that she allowed him to cage her in like that demonstrated a high degree of trust. Normally, she didn't allow anyone at her back, but this was Coinneach.

And she loved him. Trust the stupid man not to realize that but dammit she loved him. Feeling him slip into her wetness caused her to elicit a long moan.

“Oh Coinneach,” she whispered.

“Yes, *Ùrnaigh?*”

“Please, don’t stop.”

“Tell me what you want. Faster? Slower? Harder? Softer?”

“All of it, Coinneach. All of it. Let go and give it all to me,” she pled.

“I always give it all to you, *Ùrnaigh*. Always. I know no other way,” he said as he stroked into her.

Tinashe couldn’t stop the tears that fell from her eyes just as she couldn’t stop the orgasm that spread throughout her body. She was incapable of doing anything but lying atop Coinneach. She was completely boneless after the four-orgasm marathon that Coinneach had lapped, licked, nipped, sucked and stroked from her body. The all over body quiver that his talented tongue, mouth and fingers had evoked was slowly ebbing but the bastard continued to stroke her skin. He limited his touches to light caresses even though she could feel his hard throbbing cock inches away from her hip. Coinneach lay on his side with his head propped up on one hand.

Tinashe just lay there. She simply lay there for that’s all that she could do. Coinneach took her to the edge every time ... and then he brought her back. Every moment was better. Every touch was praise. Every word was a confession, every word from him was praise ... and she treasured everything Coinneach gave her especially knowing that everything he gave her was not only laced in honesty, everything he gave her was everything that he had. How could she not love this man? Even if she had no sense she’d still know that he was a good man. Even if she had no heart she couldn’t help but love him.

Watching his woman as she lay with her head pillowed on her arms he couldn't help but smirk. And while he smirked his eyes feasted on her lush body.

"*Ùrnaigh* are you alright?" Coinneach asked his woman.

"Fuck," was all she whispered.

Coinneach's smirk turned into a full on grin he rolled Tinashe onto her back. Her eyes were closed and until he dipped his fingers into her. The feel of his fingers caused her to gasp his name and open her eyes a wee bit. Even though he knew she would be wet for him still after the pleasure she'd honored him with, he needed one last taste before once again burying himself balls deep in the woman whom had conquered him.

"Hmmm," he murmured around his Tinashe-flavored fingers. Moving slowly and kissing whatever magnificent bit of skin his mouth came into contact with Coinneach covered Tinashe's body with his. When he was all the way in, he bent down and kissed the woman that he would love for all eternity.

"Yessss," she hissed as he slowly slid inside her creamy pussy.

He felt the fluttering of her internal muscles as they eased his inward thrust. Tinashe writhed beneath him trying desperately to take him deeper, faster, but Coinneach held off. Though he wanted to pound into his woman, he needed to savor these precious moments, especially when he'd been without her for two entire days. Regardless of what he had to do he never intended to go through that kind of hell again.

"So tight," he grunted as he continued the slow slide into his woman's body. Tinashe's body was accommodating him and even after their recent bout of lovemaking, it was obvious that his girth was a lot more than she was accustomed to. Tinashe's next words startled him and he was forced to use willpower he would never have believed that he possessed.

"Coinneach, go slow. Before last week it'd been over two years since I engaged in intercourse, and on top of that you're a whole lot of man ... oh damn!"

Coinneach's stared into his woman's face knowing that she spoke the truth. As he finally came to rest so deep inside of her, he once again took Tinashe's lips in a deep kiss. He held still as he kissed her in order to allow her body to further accustom itself to the last man that would enter it. He portrayed his gratitude in his kiss even as need strummed throughout his body. Aye, he wanted her but before he took his pleasure he needed to show his woman how she was going to be loved for the rest of their lives.

With a swivel of his hips he used slow and easy strokes to love her. Apparently his rhythm was working as Tinashe reacted so strongly to his touch. He smirked hearing the moaning, cussing, begging, coming from her beautiful mouth as she gasped through orgasm after orgasm. Feeling her fingers digging into his hair, he accommodated her and brought his lips to hers. They kissed like they would never get enough of each other and he had a feeling that regardless of how much time they had, it wouldn't be enough.

"I love you, Coinneach! Oh, goodness, I love you!" Tinashe screamed as another orgasm shook her to the core.

Coinneach stroked into her body a few more times then he too joined her in the ultimate pleasure.

"*Ùrnaigh*, always I will love you!" he cried as he pumped his hips back and forth before shuddering within the circle of Tinashe's arms.

After spending himself he allowed himself to fall into her softness. He was careful as he came down as he didn't want his bigger body to crush his woman. Feeling Tinashe run her hands up and down his back he sighed. Coinneach closed his eyes and listened to the residual sounds of her pleasure. Coinneach closed his eyes and reveled in the feeling of love that he felt whenever he was in the presence of the woman that he truly treasured.

Abeni was sick and tired of arguing with Eòghan for many reasons. First, he didn't argue worth a damn. Well, okay it wasn't that he argued badly it was the fact that she was accustomed to arguing with Tinashe and

her cousins where arguments were often accompanied by a little bit of tussling and a whole lot of cussing. Of course if Eòghan had cussed at her or hit her she'd have to tell her daddy about that, you know because he'd need to know why she needed a Haz-Mat team, a black helicopter and a shitload of cement. And then of course she'd need to explain all of those beakers full of Eòghan's DNA.

She could not believe that Eòghan was still bitching about his hat. The conquistador hat was cool but it wasn't that cool. Damn. Tired of hearing him go on and on about his hat she stepped down from the truck and slammed the door effectively shutting out the sound of his voice. Walking into the house she made a beeline for the kitchen where she snagged an iced cold Nu Grape soda. She was going to get the strawberries but after hearing Tinashe's cries of pleasure intermingled with Coinneach's growls she knew that they wouldn't be leaving for a bit. Digging around in the cabinets for some snack cakes she headed off to the den to watch some television.

Eòghan didn't know what had possessed him to jump on Abeni about his hat but once he'd started he couldn't shut up. It was as if that hat was a metaphor for them. She'd hid his hat and hid herself away from him and that was simply unacceptable. From her increasingly stiff posture and the way that she had thrown him the middle finger, he could tell that she was getting riled up. The fact that she jumped out of the truck and slammed the door without even looking back confirmed her anger. It was hard enough for him to believe that she'd left him in the truck but when she marched into the house and slammed the door that was beyond the pale. Unfolding himself from the truck he shut the door and invited himself in knowing that she wouldn't do it.

Though he was already put out at Abeni's ignoring him, finding her sprawled on the sofa watching Discovery Channel just got to him. How dare she have the nerve to look so damn tempting in those tight jean shorts and v-neck shirt? How dare she show off those long, muscular legs and fabulous ass when he wasn't there to warn off other males? And how dare she ignore him? Not only did she act like he wasn't in the room, right now

she was acting like he wasn't even on the whole of the earth. She couldn't treat him like this. He was a Francisco Stiùbhart man and that meant something dammit and he was going to let his feisty ass woman know that.

Stepping in front of the television he expected her to at least look up at him, but no his Abeni was being stubborn. She simply moved over on the sofa as she ordered him to move his ass. *Move his ass?* If she wanted him to move his ass then dammit he would. He'd move his ass alright as he was pounding into her tight, wet pussy. Stomping over to her he snatched the drink out of her hand and set it down on the coffee table before snatching her up. Once he had her vertical he palmed her ass and ground his hips into her letting her feel how hard his cock was.

Touching her felt so good, and yet touching her was a mistake. He was already riding the edge of his control but having Abeni in his arms caused his control to completely dissipate. Walking her backwards until her back touched the wall he pulled her ponytail causing her head to tip back, slanted his mouth over that beautiful mouth that was spewing cusses, and kissed the protests off of her tongue. The word motherfucker tasted so good coming from her mouth, as did the word asshole. No matter, he continued kissing her and not even thirty seconds later she stopped trying to talk and simply accepted his rough kiss.

He rocked into her mimicking the sexual act as he kissed her. Soon however that wasn't enough. Gripping the sweet curves of her luscious ass he lifted her off the ground and fit her sex squarely against his jean-clad cock. "Wrap your legs around me," he ordered as he rocked harder into her.

Her gasp of surprise turned to moans of pleasure. He groaned feeling Abeni sink her hands into his hair and rake his scalp with her nails. When she started pumping her hips into his, he tore his lips from hers and emitted a growl. Damn, his woman was killing him – in a good way. Reaching down he unzipped her jean shorts and thrust his hand into her silky panties. Gently brushing over the manicured hair that concealed his prize he snaked his fingers into her tight channel. Damn, damn, damn, his woman felt so good. Withdrawing his hand he couldn't stop the smirk that

settled over his face at hearing her gasp out her displeasure at the removal. Sticking his fingers into her mouth he gave her an order.

“Suck.”

And she did. His eyes drifted shut as Abeni’s skilled tongue went to work cleaning her nectar from his fingers. He wanted her to suck his cock like that. Somehow they’d never gotten around to that in the cave. Probably because her pussy had held him so tight that he couldn’t even think of being anywhere else. Groaning as she licked the last of her come off of his fingers he couldn’t help but wonder if her pussy was just as tight after their week of pretty much non-stop lovemaking.

Snatching his fingers out of her mouth, he took her mouth once again and indulged in the taste of the sweetness. She tasted good. Everything about her tasted good but he needed more. Setting her from him he went to pull her shorts off when she countered with a demand.

“Bedroom. Now,” she said as she took off running.

For a moment he could only watch her lovely ass as she headed to the room but he quickly snapped out of his daze. Undoing the few buttons on his polo shirt he tugged the shirt over his head as he walked down the hall. Before he’d reached the door he already had his zipper undone and was stroking his cock through his boxer briefs. His cock had never been this hard. As soon as he got into the room, he shut the door. Leaning against it he removed his athletic shoes and socks before pulling off his jeans and underwear. Completely nude, he simply stayed put and stroked his cock liking the way Abeni seemed hypnotized by it.

He knew she wanted it and he was going to give it to her ... but he was going to give it to her the way he wanted to, needed to give it to her. Abeni took his control and now he needed some of it back. Of course, she was Abeni so he doubted that she’d give him anything; she’d make him take control if he wanted it. And oh, how he did.

Stalking over to the bed where she sat, he pulled off he pulled off her shoes and socks. Grabbing an ankle, he tugged her closer. When she was nearer the edge he bent down and kissed her. He didn’t touch her with his hands. He simply caged her in and took her lips. He made sure to keep the

kiss light knowing that she'd want more and therefore follow him. As he backed away slightly she leaned in closer. When he backed even further away, she simply grabbed a hold of his hair and pulled in an attempt to bring his body in closer proximity.

Eòghan was glad that she wanted him but want wasn't enough. Abeni had to burn for him as he did for her. Gently pushing her away, he grabbed the edge of her shirt and pulled her shirt over her head. Before she could protest, he pushed her onto her back, grabbed hold of her shorts and worked them down her legs leaving her in only her panties and bra.

He took a step back and spent a few moments simply looking at her. Damn, his woman was beautiful. And she was his. And it was time that she recognized that fact.

Reaching out, he gently rubbed her sex through her skimpy panties ... right before ripping them from her body. Ignoring her gasp, he grabbed her knees and pushed her thighs wider so that he could gaze upon his pussy. Just as he knew it would be it was wet. Her nectar covered her pretty, little pussy. Reaching down, he gently stroked it. Up and down, up and down, each stroke bringing him closer to her pink clit. He continued stroking and right when he got closest to her clit he opened his hand and smacked her pussy causing her to gasp.

Though she gasped he noticed that she arched up into his smacks. Who knew that his feisty Abeni liked getting her clit spanked? He knew and that is why he did it. Leaning over, he quickly removed her bra and latched onto a nipple as he continued his light clit spanking. He suckled her nipple hard. Intermixing gentle bites with rough suckling he teased her full breasts as he spanked and worked her wet pussy. Finally, he bit down on her nipple and thrust his fingers into her tight sheath. The scream of pleasure that she emitted went straight to his already throbbing cock but he did not stop. He simply switched his mouth to her other breast and gave it the same treatment.

Feeling her come around his fingers he turned her over onto her stomach denying her the rest of her orgasm. Straddling her, he leaned over her back. Gently, he pressed more of his weight into her letting her know

without words that he was the physically dominant one of this couple. Though she cut a fine figure he was bigger, more muscular, heavier, stronger.

Pressing his heavy cock into her voluptuous ass he listened for the sounds of her pleasure and was rewarded for his patience. Already moaning at the skin-to-skin contact Abeni gasped when he pressed his cock into her. Smiling, he tucked his face into the space between her neck and shoulder. Being sure to touch her ear with his lips he whispered his plans.

Abeni could not believe that that motherfucker just strolled in all cas like and stood in front of the TV. How fucking rude. She knew that he wanted her to acknowledge him so she did and told him to move his ass out of the way. He did, but not in the way that she expected. Oh no. That fine motherfucker picked her up and backed her against the wall where he preceded to work her body like nobody's business.

Eòghan brought it but it wasn't enough. She was burning up for him. Grabbing hold of those luxurious locks she thrust her pussy up at him as she deepened their kiss. Dammit even though they'd fucked for almost a week straight she still wanted more. When Eòghan set her down and tried to remove her shorts, she used that opportunity to move their activities to a more appropriate venue. The wall was fine but she needed this fine motherfucker in a bed so she could fuck him like she wanted to.

She was so close, so close, so close and yet Eòghan continued to back off or change up his technique. When he'd started spanking her clit someone may as well have rung the proverbial bell signaling the start of a fight. Oh yes, the sting of his hand felt so good and when he accompanied that clit-spanking with the rough sucking of her nipples she knew this motherfucker came to win. But when he started rubbing her pussy as he sucked she tensed in anticipation of what he'd do next. When he finally thrust his fingers into her pussy as he bit down on her nipple all she could do is exhale because Eòghan had her coming like a fucking freight train.

But now he was lying on her back making her completely aware of her femininity and his masculinity. She felt dominated and protected all at

once. And she liked the feel of that. And then he started talking and her pussy stood up and made 'we're not worthy' gestures at his cock. One of her dirty little secrets was that she was turned on by dirty talk and Eòghan was the fluent in it. All she could do was bite her lip, thrust her ass up at him and hope that he made good on all that he promised.

Though he kept his tone low, Eòghan kept up a steady stream of conversation.

"You like teasing me, making my cock hard. Well, now you've got me. You like the feel of my big cock? You like the feel of my big hands spanking your clit, getting you off? In just a little while I'm going to use my big hands to spank this tempting ass. I'm going to make this ass nice and red and you're going to like it because you want to be dominated by me. After your ass is good and red then I'm going to spread you out and eat your pretty little pussy. Your pussy tastes so good but you know that because you've licked your nectar from my fingers. This time instead of licking your nectar from my fingers you're going to sample it from my lips. Once I allow you to taste that sweet treat I'm going to lay back and you're going to suck my cock. Or would you prefer to get on your back and have me feed it to you, millimeter by millimeter? Are you the kind of woman that gets off on a man making you suck his cock? Do you need me to grab your hair and shove my cock into your mouth? Because I can do that if that's what you need. Either way, I'm going to enjoy watching you swallow my cock. I'm going to enjoy the feel of your hot, succulent mouth pleasuring me. And after you pleasure me I'm going to spread your legs and spank your clit with the head of my cock before working my big, hard cock into your tight, hot pussy. I'm going to ride you hard, Abeni. When I finally allow you to shatter into unconsciousness we'll both be sweaty, but you my feisty, tempting Abeni will be wearing my marks. I'm going to suck those nipples hard and I'm going to give you a few bite marks, but don't worry, you'll only know pleasure from my body. Only after you come that final time will I come and when I do your pussy will be overflowing with my seed. When you get up, you're going to be walking like you've been

fucked good and proper. Your little pussy is going to be sore, as is your ass and your breasts, but you'll like it. You'll like it because every little bit of pain will remind you of all of the pleasure that came with it. You'll like it because every time you move you'll be reminded of what we did in this bed and all the ways you allowed me to touch you."

Abeni came as he spoke and she kept coming for a long while because Eòghan made good on his entire fucking list. And when it came time for her to choose how she wanted to suck his impressive cock, she lay on her back and made him straddle her and feed it to her. She liked the way he 'made' her take his cock into her mouth. She liked the way he 'made' her act like a total fucking whore for him. She liked it because regardless of how raw they got, she knew that Eòghan loved her. She felt it in every touch –even when he was spanking her ass raw; she heard it in every syllable he spoke –even when he was being an asshole. She felt it and she indulged in being able to be completely free with a man knowing that he would do nothing but care for her for as long as she let him. And she was going to let him; after all he did follow her to Atlanta.

The thing about being a momma is that you learned to prioritize and multitask. Though she was on the verge of orgasm she had Aodhfionn Patrick MacCadáin as a husband meaning that she was one-hundred percent confident that he'd give her the one that she was due and a grip of others as a chaser. The man might be in his mid-fifties but he was a seal and before that he was an Irishman – an extremely passionate Irishman.

Managing to wriggle out of her man's grip for a moment she metaphorically flashed all of her cards. No, not the platinum cards or even the black card by American Express, but the momma card, the wife card, the baby card, all of those type cards. Commanding silence, she held out her hand for her phone confident that one of her baby boys would bring it with all due haste. Scrolling through the numbers in memory she made calls. First on the list was Judge Oxendine, then came Rev. Dr. Bailey –the son of the man that had married her and Aodhfionn, then there were calls

to her friend Stephen Burrows who was magic with needle and thread, her girl Tracy Reese who was to accessories what John Deere was to tractors, and finally Mahrie of the Tmans Hair Salon chain.

Calling for a pad and paper she wrote a note explaining the situation. Though everyone in the neighborhood would stop by at some time or other for some food, peach iced tea and some smack-talking, knowing her man, she'd be indisposed for the majority of it. That being that she used one page to write a note explaining the situation. She used another page to write down all that she needed to be done. Instructing everyone to choose one task off of the list, she tossed her hair, gave Aodhfionn a 'come hither' look and ran into the house. She didn't run fast because she wanted him to catch her. Then again, he didn't run fast either because he liked to chase her.

Tinashe woke up from the best lovemaking she'd had since the last time Coinneach had made love to her. Glancing at the clock on the nightstand she noted the time and just like when she was in the cave, she jumped out of bed yelling for Abeni.

Cracking the bedroom door open she yelled Abeni awake. "Abeni, quick shower and move your ass. It's been over three hours," she said before running to the shower.

Coinneach was already there waiting for her, which is why it took them another hour to actually drag their asses out of the house.

No one spoke on the way back although the cab of her truck was filled with a lot of sighing. Pulling into the driveway, Tinashe squared her shoulders for what was to come. Reckoning. Dammit, it wasn't that she wasn't grown and all; it was just that. Fuck. Surprised when Coinneach caught her hand she stopped in her tracks and accepted his kiss. This kiss was intimate, slow and easy like her daddy wasn't on the roof with a sniper rifle aimed at him. Oh, but damn, she certainly enjoyed it and by the low growls in his throat, so did he. Glancing over at Abeni, she smiled and shook her head noting that Abeni was wrapped around Eòghan with her

head tucked into his shoulder fast asleep. Damn, she didn't even want to know what Eòghan had done to Abeni. Okay, yeah she did but now was not the time to be asking such things.

Though it was customary for her neighbors to come and go at will during a cookout Tinashe noticed that not only had no one left, but that a grip of people had showed up in their absence. Yeah, the food was good but that's not what they were here for. They were here to see if her daddy was going to kill Coinneach and Eòghan or simply maim them. Though she was grown she too was curious as to what was going to happen. She didn't have long to wait. As soon as she stepped into her daddy's line of eyesight, he made his decree.

"Your wedding is on Saturday."

What the fuck? It was Wednesday right now – Wednesday evening to be exact – and for the record Coinneach hadn't asked her to marry him. And for that matter even if he had asked doesn't mean that she'd say yes. They had things to work out first, like where were they going to live because she was not moving from Atlanta. Before she could comment Abeni chimed in with her two cents.

"Ha ha, you have to get married."

"That decree was for both of you, young lady," their momma said.

"Did anyone consider that we might not want to get married?" she asked as she watched Abeni pout like she always did when she didn't get her way. She was such a spoiled brat.

"We did," her father said, "but then we decided that those young Scots boys you have there didn't want to be emasculated for having marital-type relations with my daughters without the benefit of marriage."

"But you don't have actual proof that we did have relations," Tinashe began.

She noticed the tick in her father's jaw first. Then she noticed the vein at his temple start to throb right before his dual-colored eyes got all crazy-

looking. Expecting her father to say something along the lines of ‘defend yourselves’ as he looked at Coinneach and Eòghan, she was surprised when her momma spoke up first.

“You know, I believe that our baby does have a point. We don’t actually have proof so let me ask the boys. Come here, boys,” she said as she held out her arms and indicated two chairs.

“Tell me what happened. Did either of my daughter’s behave less than honorably with you?”

As she expected Eòghan was the first to respond. “Abeni touched me ma’am. I told her that I wasn’t that kind of guy but she tricked me. She told me that she had some etchings that she wanted to show me,” he said.

How a fucking man who was over six and a half feet in height managed to look all six years old she had no fucking idea but he was pulling it off like he was vying for Best Male Actor award.

“Oh baby, it’s okay. I’ll make sure that Abeni does right by you. Don’t you worry, honey,” her momma soothed Abeni’s sidekick.

She wasn’t expecting that answer but Eòghan was Abeni’s problem. Surely Coinneach, who clearly had more sense than his brother, would be all grown up about this so that they could take their time and make some well-planned decisions about their future. There was no doubt that she was going to make him her husband but it would be on her time schedule not her scheming Momma’s.

“Well, I don’t know what happened between them but why do I have to get married just because Abeni’s a slut?” Tinashe asked.

“Because you’re a whore, that’s why,” Abeni said before directing her *‘just wait until after school because I’m going to fuck you up’* stare at Eòghan.

“Tinashe, behave,” her mother said.

“But what about Abeni? She said something too,” she complained.

“Abeni behave,” her momma directed before turning to Coinneach.

“Fine,” Abeni pouted as she crossed her arms.

“Coinneach, did my daughter behave honorably with you?”

“Well, she said that if I turned up pregnant that she’d give me money for the baby, but that’s okay. I don’t want to be a burden on anyone. If I’m pregnant, I’ll just go back home. It won’t matter if I’m disgraced. It’s just Eòghan and me, but maybe he won’t want me around either,” Coinneach whispered.

“It doesn’t matter if you’re pregnant or not Coinneach. You’re my brother and I love you. We’ll raise your baby together.”

“Thank you, brother. I know this is wrong being that you don’t want me, Tinashe, but I hope our baby looks like you. That way, every time that I look at our baby I’ll have a reminder of the only woman that I’ve ever loved,” Coinneach said.

“At least you’ll have a baby to remind you of the woman that you love, Coinneach. I won’t even have that.”

“First off, the people in this family are quite potent so unless you’re throwing blanks then I’m pretty sure you’re pregnant with your first set of quads right now,” Abeni spat.

“Do you think so?” Eòghan asked with awe in his eyes. “Oh, I can get little propeller beanies for the babies. I hope that they love me,” he said.

Tinashe literally could not talk. She was watching Coinneach and Eòghan as if she’d never seen them before. She looked around for hidden cameras and didn’t see any other than the ones that her father and Teijana had strategically placed around the yard. Oh. My. Damn. She was going to punch Coinneach right in the mouth. She watched as Eòghan reached out and held Coinneach’s hand and she suddenly wanted to beat both of them. And from the look of incredulity on Abeni’s face so did she.

“What the fuck is wrong with y’all? Even if I was going to marry you, I won’t now, Eòghan,” Abeni said before turning to Coinneach. “And if you think that I’m letting my sister marry a lunatic you have another thing coming!”

“Yeah, tell him Abeni.”

“Tinashe, Abeni. That is no way to treat such nice young men.”

“But, they’re so full of sh-tuff, Mom,” she corrected. She was so mad that she’d almost cussed while speaking to her mother. Silently, she willed one of them to look at her so that they could see the fire in her eyes.

“But I love you, Abeni. I know that I’m not as handsome as other men and I’m not as young as I used to be but I love you,” Eòghan wailed and wiped an imaginary tear from his eye.

“Oh for crying out loud,” Tinashe said. “I cannot believe that y’all are going to sit here and entertain this lunatic.”

“Well, you entertained him for a long time for someone who was only supposed to run to the guesthouse to get me some frozen strawberries, which I notice that you didn’t bring,” her mother said.

“I’m sorry that I forgot your strawberries, Mom. You know what? Abeni and I are going to get them right now.”

“No don’t leave. This is your home. I’ll go,” Coinneach offered.

“And I’ll go with him,” Eòghan offered.

“Now, now. There’ll be no going anywhere. You boys need your strength, especially if you’re carrying my grandbabies. As Abeni pointed out the members of this family do tend to birth quads. You sit right here and Abeni and Tinashe will make you plates,” her momma said.

“It’s okay, we don’t want to cause trouble,” Coinneach said.

“Nonsense, you’re going to be my sons-in-law. You can call me ‘momma’ and we’ll pick you out some nice tuxedos so you’ll look all handsome for your wedding, okay?”

“Well, if you insist,” Eòghan said.

“Oh, I do. Abeni, Tinashe, come on. These babies need to eat.”

With one last glare at Coinneach, Tinashe followed her momma knowing when the battle was lost. Oh well, she could still throw Coinneach off of a cliff or something.

Coinneach knew that Tinashe or Abeni, or possibly both of them were going to kill him. If looks could kill, wow, this whole part of the world would be missing right now. Tinashe and Abeni had tempers.

“Was it worth it?” he heard their father ask.

Now that his wife had dragged her two daughters off, everyone surrounded them. They received many pats on the back and such, but also some looks that clearly said that they were going to be in so much trouble.

“Yes!” Both he and his brother spoke simultaneously.

“You do know how pissed they are, right?” he asked.

“I’m pretty sure that someone would have to bring Pythagoras from the dead to find someone up to the challenge of calculating that,” Coinneach said.

Throwing back his head and laughing, he commented. “Their mother is the same way.”

“And it’s obvious that you still have a great deal of love for her in your heart,” he said.

“Aye, that I do, boys. Now, let’s go over the regulations about the proper treatment of my delicate baby girls ... and the consequences of you failing to execute my orders.”

Ngozi knew that her daughters were pissed by the way they chucked that potato salad onto their men’s plates. She should be upset that her babies were upset but she wasn’t. Briefly she wondered if it would be wrong to dance around the house singing ‘I’m going to get some grandbabies’? Probably, but she could save that for later. Sneaking a peek at her daughters she realized that it wouldn’t be a bad idea to send the boys to a safe house and give them twenty-four hour MacCadaín protection else the girls might do harm to those fabulous boys and she just couldn’t have that. She needed lots of grandbabies.

Tinashe and Abeni lay huddled up in the king-sized bed in Abeni's room. Though they'd both been peeved – highly peeved- at Coinneach and Eòghan, they'd both come to the conclusion that revenge was a dish best served cold. And knowing just how potent their MacCadáin side was, they calculated that they'd have at least two female progeny apiece. And though they'd have to wait at least twenty years, they would enjoy turning the tables on their men when it was time for their daughters to date and or marry. Meanwhile, they were going to make them sweat. Right now, at least one uncle patrolled the rooftop, another patrolled the grand balcony along the front of their home and still another sat in a chair outside of the rooms that Coinneach and Eòghan slept in. They didn't know why everyone thought that they might make an attempt on their lives. They did after all love those pesky bastards ... not that they'd tell them until after the wedding.

**Epilogue: *Onegei Shimasu* (I welcome you to train with me ...
literally: 'I Make a Request')**

In spite of the rush they had pulled off a fabulous wedding. This was a ceremony that would go down in Atlanta history as one of the most beautiful. Held on the exquisite grounds of the Patrale area, the lush grass fought with the abundant flora for the admiration of the guests. The area reserved for the many, many guests was filled to overflowing with family, flowers, and laughter.

The grooms looked handsome in their dress kilts. If anyone wondered why both the grooms had black eyes no one asked. They were after all marrying Harper-MacCadáin women.

The father of the brides looked just as handsome in his own dress kilt. Those noticing the love marks that dotted the tanned skin of the strong column of his neck fell into two camps. There were those who wondered why he didn't attempt to conceal them and there were those who were pretty sure that he'd have a matching set before the reception began. After all, he was a MacCadáin man.

The mother of the brides wore a beautiful dress made from the MacCadáin tartan. Of course she was stunning –as usual. Then again, did Ngozi Harper-MacCadáin know how to be anything else but stunning? She was after all a Harper and a MacCadáin.

The bridesmaids were stunning in their gowns although one wouldn't think that Carolina blue and MIT red (or Stanford red) as the younger sister insisted it was, went together but somehow the designers managed to pull it off. The filmy, off-the-shoulder gowns showed off their impressive cleavage and the long dress showed off their full-figures. If anyone wondered why all four of the women marched down the aisle bearing shotguns, no one asked. Those in attendance knew those women and therefore they knew that those shotguns carried live ammunition.

The brides, oh goodness. The brides were breathtakingly lovely in their gowns. The younger sister wore Carolina blue and the older sister wore MIT red. Wearing tiaras with veils that flowed down their backs, they caused most in attendance to gasp at their beauty. A few people might

wonder why they were slap-boxing down the aisle but they obviously didn't have pesky older sisters. A few more people might be wondering at the litany of dots and dashes that fell from their lips, but then they probably weren't military so they could just shut the hell up.

No one was surprised when the mother of the brides marched up the aisles and swatted her daughter's behinds. They weren't even surprised that both brides insisted that the other had started it. They were surprised that it took Aodhfionn longer than a nanosecond to drag his wife in for a deep kiss; then again he did have two spoiled daughters on his arms.

The brides did finally reach the Altar. The wedding finally began ... after both brides loudly told the grooms to 'shut the hell up' right before apologizing to their Uncle, the pastor and officiate. The pastor got to the part where the couples exchanged 'I dos'. He paused when all of the bridesmaids pumped their shotguns to hasten the brides' responses. The pump sound of the shotgun went nicely with the impatient foot-tapping of the grooms. After they kissed their brides, the grooms finally settled down a bit. Of course, they were still kissing the brides while everyone else made their way to the reception.

The reception was beautiful. There was beautiful china, expensive crystal and elaborate centerpieces. And lying on those plates wasn't one bit of caviar, but every kind of southern delicacy one could imagine and in a whole lot of those glasses was peach iced tea. It was a perfect reception. And if anyone wondered why the towering and elaborate cake was red velvet cake with white butter cream frosting and Carolina blue accents, well obviously they weren't paying attention. And if they wondered what that series of dots and dashes were that decorated the cake that was probably for the best. Military people understood and the rest of the guests had southern roots so they didn't give a damn about the decorations; they simply wanted some cake. Now there were a few people who did indeed wonder why the older bride had on a propeller beanie and the younger groom had on a conquistador hat. Hell, we're the writers and we wondered that too. Alas, that is a tale for another day.

***Please note that though condoms make sex *SAFER*, condoms cannot prevent infection one-hundred percent of the time.**

This concludes Sibling Survivalry.

Thank you for reading. We hope that you enjoyed the tale as much as we enjoyed writing it.

Jeanie & Jayha

Praises, compliments, adulation and the like for Jeanie and Jayha can be left at:

www.jeanieandjayha.com

Jeanie Johnson and Jayha Leigh

Besides being intelligent divas who pen kickass prose, Jeanie and her momma are dessert-eating, take-no-shit, tell-it-like-they-feel instead of tell-it-like-people-want-to-hear-it women. They are women who have brains and aren't afraid to use them; feelings and aren't afraid to express them; and, middle fingers which they'll happily use to salute out of line peeps. Independently, both are forces of nature that leave you begging for mercy or begging for more...depending on your level of tolerance. Even better, when they're in cahoots, they transform into the best tag team duo, bound together by the pen.

Jeanie is a shagacious word slinger, who will be world ruling side-by-side with her momma. As long as her Polar Bear (*shhh it's a secret*) does not drink all of her Cokes, all will be well. After gifting her clan with a knee buckling narrative or two, Jeanie intends to relax by throwing on her favorite hoodie and jumping in her chromed-out truck in search of the alpha that is the basis of the heroes in all of her stories.

Her momma, Jayha is a lot closer to the convent than Jeanie, which is ironic considering that she's been accused of being the catalyst for the fall of the Roman Empire and a cult leader with low aspirations. When not indulging her torrid affair with ESPN, she finds time to grace Mr. Me with her presence. Jayha constantly hones her skills, so that when she ascends to her position as world leader, stupid people will be punished and desserts will be easily acquired on every corner. Until that fan-freaking-tastic day arrives, she'll continue to walk among the people rocking her standard outfit of Crocs and a blue t-shirt, composing rapturous reads...all while straightening her crooked halo.

See people, this is the kind of praise you get when you have Yvonne as your MMFIC and Rolanda as MNWIC. Thanks Von and Rolanda.