

# The Warden's Elf



Viola  
Grace

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THE WARDER'S ELF  
BOOK SEVEN

BY

VIOLA GRACE

## CHAPTER ONE

The day her cousin Sephany was stolen, Alora Negri knew it was the day she would have to honour her family obligation. Taking a look at the group surrounding the spot where the elf and his burden had disappeared, she took a deep breath and answered the question they were all asking, *why Sephany?*

“Actually, he was here for me.” As the focus shifted to Alora, she flushed an unbecoming pink.

Gorven Dremlock, dwarf lord, looked directly at her. “What do you mean, Alora?”

“I mean that, well, my great great grandmother was promised to a lord of the dark elf realm, and she ducked out of it by running off with my great great grandfather, Agrath the goblin.” The people within earshot looked a little surprised. “Great great Gran was afraid of enclosed spaces.” She was quiet as soon as she finished speaking. She let them talk and kept silent. She knew what she had to do.

It was a hard question, but Gelo had to ask it.

“So, there is a family obligation here? You will willingly fulfill it?”

“I will.” Her whisper fell on the silent crowd. “As soon as you find out where I have to go.”

Gorven took his place near the depression where his daughter had disappeared, tasted the dirt and sighed heavily. “Dark elves. Definitely. But why Seph, if you were here Alora?”

Alora hung her head, “I stayed behind the speaker. No one could see me. And our colouring is basically the same.” It had been a painful irony, her vivacious cousin taken because Sephany was out in the middle of the dance floor while she hid from the public eye.

“I haven’t seen it before, but you are right. Your hair matches my daughter’s, as do your eyes. Perhaps he was working from a scry view.” Gorven was gentle with his observations as if he didn’t want to scare her. She knew why, the shyest of the Warders, she rarely made it to family functions, preferring books to people.

Her parents had died in a regular car accident when she was a child and the clan of the Warders had taken her in, surrounding her in a charming cocoon, but she never felt that she blended in. There was always something slightly wrong about her, her magic and her social skills amongst the gregarious clan. She was always one step behind.

Knowing her particular portion of clan history

had frozen her in her tracks when the dark elf had appeared, and like the coward she was, she had hidden behind the speakers to watch and see what he would do. The sudden grab had shocked her and remorse had filled her shortly after. It was time to pay the piper. Or the lord of the Dark elves in this case. "Can you find the nearest portal?"

"It will bring you into the main court of the dark elves. But it is a one-way portal. Once there, only the elves' magic can get you out. The minerals around that place have odd properties." Gorven was solemn as he made sure she understood everything he said.

"I understand, but a promise is a promise. It is about time that I fulfilled it." She jerked her head up and then looked down at the dwarf who had been brave enough to become the husband and father of Warders.

"Malksis will accompany you and take Sephany home. We will have supplies sent to you and someone will check on you on a regular basis. Either a Warder or a member of the half-blood club."

She nodded and kept her mouth shut for the rest of the deliberations. The moment Malksis swore to Gorven he would bring Sephany home, it was time to leave. A round of cousins hugged her before someone assisted her onto Malksis's back. "Talk to you soon." She waved as Gorven chanted

and sent them off to the lair of the dark elves.

She clung hard to the unicorn's mane as the waves of magic rippled around her and transported her to her fated male.

No romance for her, just hostages and bribery. It figures.

\* \* \* \*

Alora fought nausea for a number of reasons when they arrived. The cavern they were in was huge, a large throne was at the front of the chamber and she was on a unicorn standing on a royal seal. Two doors opened behind the throne and out of them came Sephany, looking stunning and graceful in an elven gown. The man next to her took Alora's breath away.

He was six and a half feet of gorgeous midnight skin, silken pale hair and pants so tight that she was equally fascinated and frightened. Jewels and bands crossed his skin, causing the delineation of the individual muscles to be shown in sharp relief.

Completely at ease, Sephany introduced them. "Caldur, that is my cousin, Alora, and that is my unicorn, Malksis." Guards were standing every few feet with swords and spears drawn.

"Stand down, my guard. I believe that my bride has arrived after all these centuries of waiting." The guards stepped back, but stayed ready.

The red eyes of the elf lord were completely focussed on Alora and no one else. Her heart pounded in her chest and she slid off the unicorn's back. She walked to stand in front of her new lord and knelt. "I am here to fulfill the bargain made by my ancestor, Vorsera. My family's shame of her actions has lasted for these centuries."

He looked from Alora to Sephany. "I can see why he was confused. Unless you were standing next to each other, the image we had could have been either one of you." He looked down at the woman at his feet. She peeked and looked up. "Rise, Alora. Sephany, you may go with your unicorn, but be warned, you will have to travel above ground and we are in a harsh area of Realm. Good luck getting home."

Alora rose and fidgeted. She had no idea what came next.

Sephany hugged her, "Take care and we will get a mirror to you as soon as we can."

"I am so glad that you are okay, Seph. Stay with Mal, he's a good guy and it nearly tore his heart out when you disappeared." Her shy whisper caressed Seph's ear and when she drew back to look in her solemn cousin's eyes, her own laughter was gone. "It's okay. I want this."

Taking a deep breath, giving Lord Caldur a curtsy, Sephany moved to Mal and reached out to touch him. At the first sniff, he jerked his head,

but then he examined her from head to toe and was satisfied by something. One of the dark elves helped her mount. With her skirts rucked up and parted by her thighs position, she was ready to ride.

Caldur raised his hand and cast a spell. "Farewell, Sephany. The best five minutes I have spent in centuries."

## CHAPTER TWO

“Now, what to do with my bride?” Lord Caldur paced around her, looking her over from head to toe as if she was some livestock he wanted to purchase, or had purchased for that matter. “I don’t think I want you to run.”

She kept her head down and whispered, “I won’t run. I promise.”

He laughed. “Pardon me if I don’t take the promises of your family at face value. It has taken them over three hundred years to fulfill this promise and I don’t hazard another one. No. I have a remedy for possible escape. Shall I show you?”

She looked at him, mute. He had a right to be ticked with her family. The honourable thing would be to go along with whatever he had planned over the last few hundred years while her ancestress had kept him from starting his own family. Caldur held out his hand for her to take and when she slipped her pale fingers into his

dark granite grip, a shiver ran through her.

He led her back to the open doors behind the throne. Silently, she followed his lead as he hauled her to a large chest at the side of his bed. Caldur extracted delicate bands of silver and held them out to her. "These bands will keep you within fifty yards of me at all times. Put them on."

Her hand shook as she took the first band and snapped it into place around her wrist. A chill ran down her spine as the energy in the band spread up her arm and locked her into a ward. The second band on her other arm clicked shut with a finality that shook her.

"The ankle bands need to go against your skin. Remove your trousers." He had moved a few feet away and watched her discomfort with a certain amount of amusement. "I have to say, that if your cousin was here, this would involve a lot more cursing."

Being compared to Sephany hurt. "I am sure it would." Her words were so soft she didn't even know if she had spoken out loud. To subvert his desire to have her strip, she flipped off her shoes, peeled off her socks and rolled her jeans up to mid-calf. The snap of the cuffs came faster now. She didn't hesitate, simply snapped them in place and stood.

"There is one more." Dangling from his fingertips was a delicate collar of finely wrought

design. "Put it on."

She was stuck. Alora had worn a turtleneck to the party with her black jeans. The only way to attach the band was to remove her shirt. The glint in his eyes said he knew it. "Fine." She turned her back to him and pulled the shirt over her head, then combed her hair down over her chest. Her bra covered most of the curves of her breasts and it was only that covering that enabled her to face him. Taking in a shaking breath, she turned back to him.

"What is that?" He leaned back and made her reach forward for the collar.

It took her a bit of angling, but she was able to catch it with her fingers. "It's called a bra. It's a new type of corset, it only supports the breasts." The effort involved in closing the clasp on the collar was far more than the other cuffs. She took a deep breath, relaxed and the snick of the latch finally echoed in her ears. Letting her air out on a sigh, she reached quickly to put her shirt back on. Caldur jerked it away.

"I don't think I like this new clothing." He kept her shirt in his hand as he walked over to the wardrobe and selected a deep green gown for her. "Put this on. But it is designed to be worn over bare skin. That *bra* will be out of place under it."

Her mouth opened and closed without sound. "What about my panties, can I keep them?"

“Show them to me and I will let you know.” He draped the gown over the foot of the bed and lay down to watch her strip.

“You are kidding.”

“I am not. You are my bride and we will consummate our union in short order. But not until we have dinner. You seem a little tense and I think a meal will relax you.” He sprawled on the bed with his hands tucked behind his head, waiting for the show.

“Tense? You think this is tense? I just volunteered to what basically amounts to a life sentence down here!” Irritated as hell, she finally was pushed to the limit and her clothing went flying as she stripped to the skin. “Take a good look, asshole!” She was shrieking loudly as she spun so he could take a gander at her pale skin. Freckles dusted the ivory of her elbows and knees, danced across her cheekbones. Her breasts were proportional, a solid 36C that didn’t like being unconfined. They bounced too much. Her hips made shopping for jeans a nightmare, and her favourite feature, her ankles, were confined by the cuffs.

He was blinking at her in surprise as she darted forward and pulled her new gown over her head. She hissed in irritation when she pulled it on backward, then fought free and made the vee of the neck find its way into the appropriate location.

"There. Done. Happy?"

He stood and approached until she had to tilt her head back to meet his eyes. His hands wrapped around her and she stiffened. She jumped as he tugged at the laces on the back of the gown until her breasts were thrust forward and the fabric of the dress was taut against her.

"Not happy yet, but terribly impressed." He tied her laces tight and then jerked her against him. "I didn't think there was any fire under that calm exterior."

"Well, men behaving like jackasses bring it out." She would have said more, but his mouth swooped onto hers and parted her lips with his tongue. He had mentioned fire and the slow stroke of his tongue along hers brought it to the surface. She gasped, but it came out as a moan. She wove her fingers into the hair at the nape of his neck and held him to her as his erection hardened against her.

His hands gripped her shoulders and pushed her away from him. "That answers that question. You are definitely the correct woman for me."

Away from the comfort and warmth of his body, she felt lost. Nothing familiar was in the cave. Even Caldur was a foreign creature to her. An elf unlike any she had met before.

The cuffs were cool on her wrists, neck and ankles and shoes had not been offered. She

resolved to not ask him for anything. She crossed her arms over her breasts and glared at him. The light pulse in her lips reminded her that the kiss had been amazing. Her nipples were still hard. "And of course you tested out my cousin first, right?"

"Indeed. She was not the one." His lips twitched in amusement. "She was close, but not quite right."

"Ah." She turned her back on him and studiously memorized the contents of the room. The light source was the walls themselves. The wardrobe where he had found her gown was over against a far wall. The bed was large and fairly central, but out of the way of the door. A writing desk was against one wall and a large mirror was installed opposite the bed. She didn't want to think about that too hard.

Of course he had kissed Sephany. Who wouldn't? Alora smiled slightly, well, he would have had to find some way to shut her up and kissing her would do it. Seph was famous for her urge to talk constantly.

A dark panel of wood caught her attention and, as her hand touched it, a bookshelf was exposed. Romantic classics, old and new, covered the shelf. The selection surprised her, but she studiously went over the titles until she found one she recognised. She pulled it off the shelf and noted

the well-thumbed pages. She took a seat at the desk and reacquainted herself with the works of the Brothers Grimm.

The door to Caldur's room opened and closed quietly. When she looked around, she was alone. She closed the book slowly, leaned her head on her folded arms and let silent tears fall.

\* \* \* \*

Caldur drifted through the wall and watched his bride cry. The heat that had seared them both had obviously worn off. Perhaps it was his references to Sephany that had caused her grief?

Alora's cousin had been so full of fire that it had been hard not to look at her. She lit up a room. Alora was more of a slowly burning coal, giving off heat that couldn't be felt until you touched her.

Her curves had fit his hands perfectly, the flare of her hips cradled his, and the soft swell of her belly cushioned his cock. Her breasts were entirely too tempting for him to ignore, so he decided his best option was to leave their room and ghost back into the wall. His men had looked at him with curiosity, but had shrugged and continued setting up a dining table in the throne room.

Now, Alora sat in their chamber, alone and crying. What could he do to make her feel better? He knew what he wanted to do with her, but

flinging her to her back, lifting her skirts and ploughing into her may not be the best first step.

\* \* \* \*

She heard the door open and quickly wiped her eyes, opening the book again. "Back so soon?"

"Our dinner is ready. I thought you might like to eat in the throne room before we take a short tour of the local caverns." He held his hand out to her gallantly and smiled when she took it.

"Thank you. I am quite hungry." The flash of her new wristbands made her frown when she took a look at the contrast of their limbs. His hand could easily span her back, his wrist easily twice the size of hers. She felt downright dainty.

As she stepped across the floor, she became increasingly aware of her bare feet peeping out from beneath her skirts. "Are there any shoes in that wardrobe of yours? My feet get cold." Since the stone floor was spotless, it was not a matter of keeping out particulates.

"The boot maker will arrive in the morning. If you had been any other woman, I would have kept your heels in the air for the first two days."

Caldur's frank sexual statement caused a heated flush in Alora's skin and as much as she hated it, he noticed.

"If that is all it takes to make you blush, I will

make every effort to bring that lovely rose to your cheeks." He looked her over carefully, "And everywhere else."

Fantastic, he had noticed that she blushed under her gown. That was fabulous. She was so happy she might just puke. "Glad to know you are observant." She kept the rest of her comments to herself as they took up opposite seats on a long table in the centre of the throne room. He sat, framed by the throne, and she was thirty feet away at the other end. At a signal that she didn't see, more white and silver haired elves walked in. They took their seats at their lord's table.

Another silent signal and more dark elves came forward with trays of food. They placed them down on the table, selections of meat, bread, cheese and fruits at regular intervals and then they faded into the background.

"Gentlemen, I present to you my bride, Alora Negri. Descendant of Vorsera and Warder. Show her all honour and deference for she came to me of her own free will." He held a cup of wine up and, as one, his men toasted their new lady.

A little surprised, she remembered to nod in thanks and then took a piece of bread and broke it. A relieved sigh went up from the table and the men tucked in to their dinner. Alora used more caution with the foods, identifying them before eating, but she ate until she was full. She intended

on getting drunk and it wouldn't do to try it on an empty stomach.

When the servant came up to fill her wine cup for the third time, she caught a concerned look from the elf nearest her. Smiling tightly, she sipped at the wine and listened in on the conversations near to her. They were discussing some sort of training exercise that she couldn't understand.

Oops. Her cup was empty. She held it up and it was filled again. When she sipped, she made a face. Someone had switched her to fruit juice. She glared at the nearby elf. "Did you do that?"

"I did. I am sorry, my lady. It did not seem to be a proper way to start your life with us."

She was fighting the urge to cry. "It seemed like a good idea at the time."

"May I ask what is distressing you?"

"Being away from my friends and family. Not having familiar faces around me. Not having someone to talk to. Wondering where all the women are. Stuff like that." She slugged down some juice and closed her eyes. Silence fell between them and she smiled sadly.

"Ah. Well, you may talk to your husband. I am sure he would listen. And as for the men, these are volunteers who stayed with him. The rest formed underground enclaves a great distance from here."

A hand took hers and rubbed the back of her

knuckles with a thumb. She blinked and looked from her hand to the elf holding it. "Caldur. Hello." She was still a little tipsy. It fell on her mind why he was there. "Oh."

"Shiven asked me to speak to you. He was concerned that you felt alone here."

"Is he the one I was talking to?"

"Yes. You won't feel alone once we consummate our union." He raised her hand to his lips and left a soft kiss there.

Shivers of sensation ran down her spine at that light touch. She cleared her throat and looked around. They were the only two left at the table. "Didn't you promise me a short tour?"

His red eyes sparkled with amusement. "Indeed I did." He stood and then held her chair for her as she rose. Her hand was tucked into his elbow in record time and they were headed down one of the myriad halls running off the throne room.

"This is the hall to the main bathing chambers. It is a communal bath, so you may not wish to take a soak in the pools."

Steam clouded the air as they got closer to the baths. She could hear the sounds of men's voices. "You may be right. I may want to skip that. What are my bathing options?"

"We have a large bath chamber off the bedroom. You will have complete privacy." He

steered them past the cave opening where she could see a number of nude and towel wearing elves lounging around. A few were draped together in intimate couples and she just shrugged and kept her eyes on the floor.

“Why do you do that?”

“What?”

“Keep your eyes on the ground like a beaten dog.”

“It’s safer.”

“Safer? Than what?”

“Than looking at the world and seeing things I can’t have.” Her gaze caught his and poured her loneliness into him. His red eyes widened in surprise.

He pulled her to him and brought his mouth against hers to tease and flirt.

She was lost in a sea of new reactions and shivered in his arms. If they hadn’t been interrupted by some men on their way to the baths, she may have climbed him then and there.

## CHAPTER THREE

When they were interrupted, Alora jumped back like a scalded cat. Her hand covered her mouth and she stared at the floor in confusion. This sort of behaviour was unlike her. She rarely, if ever, had carnal urges, but the compulsion to strip Lord Caldur naked and lick him from head to toe was really quite strong.

“My touch offends you?”

“No. My touch scares me. I don't normally...” Alora shrugged and quickly met his gaze. He didn't seem too upset, merely a little frustrated. “Can we save the rest of the tour for when I have shoes? The floor is a little distracting.”

“Of course, little one. How thoughtless of me.” He didn't ask, merely scooped her up and held her high against his chest.

His skin was warm under her hands, his heartbeat slow and steady. She closed her eyes and simply enjoyed the feeling of being surrounded by his scent, his energy, and having

the decisions out of her hands. She almost always said *no* when given an option, so perhaps that was the only way this would work. Alora had to find a way to make him make her choices for her. At least in the bedroom.

Trembling with the excitement of her plan, she tried to come up with a strategy. As Caldur's strides took them closer and closer to his chamber, her mind scrabbled around to find the right angle of approach. She could either try and seduce him into savaging her or she could simply come clean and tell him she had no idea what she was doing.

The first actually required less courage than the second.

Inside his chamber, she held still as he deposited her on the bed. Finally, she couldn't take his heated gaze assessing her from head to toe any longer. "Caldur, I haven't done this before and I have no idea what to do next." His eyes widened at her frankness. Chuckling, he sat next to her on the bed and she scooted over to give him more room. He caught her before she got too far.

"I am glad that you mentioned it, but I was planning to go slowly regardless. You have an innocence in your face that is hard to miss."

Just like that, her skin was on fire with a blush. "I am a little appalled that you could see through me that easily."

He wrapped his hand around her ankle and

started a gentle stroke up to the inside of her thigh. "It's endearing. And I have been trying to distract myself from your delectable body, instead of flinging you to your back and driving between your thighs."

"Oh." His fingers continued their ascent under her skirt and she held her breath, completely aware she was nude under the thin film of fabric.

"Were you wondering as to the significance of the bands that I had you place on yourself?" His gentle touch had bent her knee, moving her thighs apart slightly. "In the larger scheme, it was to keep you from running from me. But as with all of my kind, I can control the motion of metals." He flicked his fingers and her arms spread out to her sides. Her legs got the same treatment.

His voice stayed calm, soothing and she didn't fight the motion of her bands. This was what she wanted, needed him to do. She couldn't ask him herself. She could only stifle gasps as the gown lifted with her knees rising and parting. The cool air of the room sent a shiver through her that wet her channel and hardened her nipples.

Caldur kicked off his boots and crawled into the bed, kneeling between her thighs.

"I thought you said you were going to take it slow."

"Considering I want to ram into your wet heat to the hilt until you scream for me to stop, yes.

This *is* slow.”

A gesture from his hands removed the gown in one motion. Magic was a scary thing.

“I want to feel you glove-tight around my cock as I pump into you until you hold me so tight I blow apart.”

Naked and pinned to the bed by the only things she was wearing, Alora felt distinctly vulnerable. And hot. The slow burn his light touches had started inside her were showing the promise of a true bonfire. His words had lit the kindling. She felt the trickle of moisture from her cunt, slowly wending its way between her ass cheeks, and her blush was back in full force. When he sat between her knees and simply looked at her, she tried to close them.

He stopped her. “It is a lovely view, so slick and pink, and enjoying being on display.” He reached out with two fingers and stroked through the dew she produced, then lifted those fingers to his lips. “Fantastic. I can taste your magic, even here.”

Even if she had been willing to talk, her throat locked in shock when he touched her sex so casually, and licked her even more casually. When the two fingers returned to her and started a slow exploration, her hips rose to either meet him or evade him. She didn’t know.

Every petal, nub and hollow of her sex was

examined, learned and stimulated. When he found her clit, her hips rose rapidly and she could almost see him making notes in his head. She closed her eyes when he bent his head toward her mound, biting her lip when he exhaled in a warm stream of air across her damp flesh.

“Don’t stifle it. I want to hear every sigh, moan and scream.”

His voice was dark and it vibrated all of her nerves between her thighs. Without warning, his tongue dipped into her pussy and lapped a long slow stroke up to her clit. She mewled as the warm scrape of his tongue on her sensitive nub raised her hips against his mouth. She wanted more and her body was begging for it.

He drove two fingers into her, stopping when he pressed against her hymen, and then drawing back to drive in again as his mouth worked feverishly against her clit. Her pants and moans grew higher and higher with every slide of his flesh inside hers and, as her climax hit her, she screamed and her air left her in a rush. His fingers thrust into her hard, keeping her falling into her release for what seemed like forever.

When he finally let her go, she slumped back onto the coverlet, a light sheen of sweat misted her whole body. He rested his chin on the bright hair of her mound and smiled up at her across the pale expanse of her body. “That’s a good start. A slow

start.”

Her voice was breathy, even to her own ears, “That is slow? Why are you still dressed while I am not?”

“To keep it slow. If too much of my skin touches yours, my good intentions may go out the window.” He rubbed his chin slowly across her skin, from side to side. His arms reached under her thighs so he could free them to stroke the soft flesh of her torso.

He was really paying attention. She responded so much better to a light stroke than a hard grip, as his calloused fingers danced across her breasts, her collarbone, and flicked each and every freckle sprinkled on her skin. He repositioned himself to hover above her, supported on his arms. His control was costing him. His chest gleamed onyx in the light.

He retraced the path of his fingers with his tongue, flicking her freckles, laving her collarbone, nibbling the upper slope of her breasts and gently suckling at her nipples in turn. She whimpered, moaned and tried to squirm away from his attentions as he used his teeth in earnest. Sharp points grazed her areola and it was a shock to realize the dark elf had fangs. Her moan rose to a light squeak and she held her breath.

“Ah. I thought you may have noticed during the kiss.” His breathy chuckle was dark and

amused. He pressed the fangs more firmly against the underside of her breast and closed his mouth carefully, letting her feel the sharp pain while it could still translate into pleasure. "Biting during mating is common amongst my kind, but nothing permanently damaging."

"Good to know," her voice was still high.

He rested his forehead between her breasts and laughed. "I am glad I waited for you, Alora." He raised his head and kissed the tip of her nose before working his way down her neck, stopping to suck at each ear lobe.

Surprisingly, that seemed to be her erogenous zone, and she lifted her hips with every little suckle.

"That's interesting. Do you have any other sensitive spots I should know about?" He leaned back with his feral grin and met her dazed gaze.

It didn't occur to her to lie. "Only, um. My hands. Fingers. And toes. That covers it."

"Really? Oh, that is interesting, for now, I don't have much control left and I want to spend it inside you."

She blinked and in a moment, he wore nothing but his armbands, torque and an intent feral focus. His cock rubbed against her slit, making way for its entry. With a few tight motions, he burrowed into her an inch.

He had stretched her with his fingers during

their earlier play, but still proceeded slowly with his penetration. At her maidenhead, he stopped, pressing and releasing until it was obvious it was not going to give way easily. He rested on her for a minute, forehead to forehead, getting his focus together. "Let's try this another way." He supported his weight on one arm and reached between them to rub her clit lightly with his thumb. Her body surged toward him at the touch, but he backed up, waiting until he had her earlobe in his possession. He suckled hard while he stroked her clit and drove into her in the same moment. *Hooray for multitasking.*

Her orgasm hit with the tearing pain, and once again, Caldur stopped all motion.

"There. That wasn't so bad." He sweated profusely.

His control had cost him, but still he waited for her body to acclimate to his. It was sweet, but she wanted to know what would happen next. She lifted her hips and felt him slide more firmly into her. A moan broke free and she wanted to do it again.

Slowly and carefully, he thrust, pulling back and sliding forward, watching her face for any signs of discomfort. There was still pain, but there was pleasure with the pain and, if she didn't mistake herself, she was once again on her way to an orgasm.

As he started to focus on his own pleasure, he lowered onto her and, with every thrust, rubbed her clit on the in stroke. He moved faster and harder against her.

The red of his eyes focused on her in his feral manner a little more than she could bear. Alora closed her eyes for a moment, but as soon as she did, he stopped all movement.

“Look at me when I make love to you. I want to see your release in your eyes.”

His voice was hardly more than a snarl, but she complied.

He lifted her hips against him to pump into her fully and pressed into her like he was trying to fuse his cock into her wet heat. The friction grew and so did her tension. She peaked without warning. Screaming, with eyes wide and back arched, her body tried to absorb his again. This time her shriek joined with his wild roar of satisfaction as he pulsed and pumped his seed into her.

She had heard of aftershocks, but the reality swamped the assumptions based on gossip overheard at the Warder's events. She was going to remember to give them an update to their descriptions. *Very nice* just didn't cover it.

With her hands and legs still fastened by magic, she couldn't close her thighs or cover up. Good thing Caldur kept her warm with his body on

hers. He lifted one hand and suddenly she was free. She wrapped her arms around his neck and kissed his pointy ear. To get rid of the stresses in her thighs, she wrapped them around him and hung on. If he had been standing, he would have been wearing her.

Breathing in the scent of their mating, her musk and his blending in a heady mix of pheromones and satisfaction, she only had one thought—*Oh my god, that was good. When can we do that again?*

## CHAPTER FOUR

A hot soak in the small swimming pool he called a tub worked the new twinges from her thigh muscles, and a light massage took care of the residual tension in her body.

"How are you feeling?" His erection prodded her spine, but he seemed disinclined to use it.

"Fine," her voice was husky. Apparently she was a screamer. "A little sore, and kind of disappointed that we couldn't try again right away."

He wrapped his arms around her and held her tightly. "There is plenty of time. With our lives twined together, we can spend whole weeks rolling around and finding what gives the other pleasure. You have a frail human body. I have accepted this." His matter of fact tone ruffled the sated lust within her.

"We still have other options. I think. If you are willing?" She squirmed sideways on his lap and took his erect cock in her hand. She pumped him

slowly under the water, thumbing the tip of the flared head and then sliding her fingers down again. He groaned and leaned his head back on the rim of the tub, closing his eyes as she fisted his erection with deliberate attention.

She watched to see when he groaned, winced or bit his lip with those sharp teeth and, shifting a bit, used the unencumbered hand to cup his sac gently under the water. His eyes opened wide and he groaned deep in his chest. A sudden shout and pulse in her hand had Alora splashing back into the tub in surprise.

She sank under the water and held her breath until she was firmly lifted from the suds and bubbles by two gentle hands. He propped her on the side of the tub with her legs dangling down into the water. A thick linen towel was wrapped around her shoulders to keep her warm. He stood between her knees and used his shoulders to widen her stance.

“Thank you for that. My own hand has never managed to feel so soft and yet strong. One day I want to feel your mouth on my cock, but that can wait for another time.” His wet hair shone silver in the light of the bathing room, his pointed ears obvious in the slicked back locks. With no further warning, his tongue passed the full length of her slit in one swipe, parting her for his tongue and fingers.

She braced her weight on her hands and arched into his mouth, occasionally catching a glowing red flare out of the out of her half-closed eyes as he watched her writhe under his ministrations. When she came, her voice shrieked across the marble tiles, an echo that would probably continue to reverberate through the caves in the dark for centuries.

Caldur surged up out of the water and kissed her. Tremors raced through her skin. She tasted herself on him and almost pulled his ears off as she dove into the kiss.

“Ow.”

Abashed, she backed away, catching her breath. “Sorry.” She let go of him as if he was hot, and to her, he was.

He rubbed at one pointed ear and smiled at her. “Don’t be sorry. Just remember they are attached and I want to keep them that way.”

Smiling sweetly, she put a foot to his chest and pushed. He fell backward with a satisfying splash and, with a giggle, she scooted out of arm’s reach, wrapping the towel around her body. She backed up against the door and fought her grin as he came out of the water looking like a wet cat. “I didn’t touch your ears!”

He shook his head to clear the water and stalked out of the bath with as much dignity as he could muster. “You realize that you are showing

disrespect to your lord and master.”

His stride took him to her in a few seconds and try as she could, she was unable to move away.

“Did you forget about the bands, my dear?” He loomed over her and exposed his sharp white teeth, startling against the deep onyx of his skin.

A sudden lunge toward her neck and she tensed for pain, only to suffer the indignity of having her ear nipped and the trail of a tongue down her neck. When he lifted his head and smiled down at her, she was lost. Her future was in those eyes. She was so lost in that ruby world, it was only when her whole body shivered that she realized he had dropped her towel. She shifted her arms and was relieved, and a little embarrassed, to find she could move.

Gathering her dignity as well as she was able, she stooped to retrieve the wrap and almost bumped into his erect cock on the way down. “You certainly have a quick recovery time.” The words popped out of her mouth without her thinking about it. She blushed and quickly straightened, tucking the towel back into place. He stood, naked and amused, in front of her. She scooted to the side to get around him. She retrieved another towel for her hair and worked on getting the last of the dampness out of her locks. “It is actually warm down here.” She had surprised him. She could see it in his eyes.

"We are near hot springs and they run under the majority of the floors that are used. Are you always this interested in infrastructure?"

"It pops up now and then."

Caldur crossed his arms and leaned against the door to the bedroom, cutting off her escape. "It's an interesting topic. I have several books on the subject."

"I noticed that you have quite the collection in your library."

"Oh, those are just the books that I bring for a little light bedtime reading. The actual library is on the tour I was planning on giving you when we got distracted."

Distracted was a good word for it. Watching him all nude and dripping wet, she felt a little wet herself. His nostrils flared and she had the horrible feeling he could scent her heat. She finger combed her hair and tried to think of horribly unsexy things. Tires, asphalt, loaves of bread...whoops. Even baked goods weren't safe.

She geared up for a pithy retort, then yawned mightily. "Sorry." She had just finished apologizing when her mouth opened again. She was exhausted and now that the adrenaline had worn off, she was an inch from going face down. "I think I need a nap."

"Of course you do." He briskly towelled off and then wrapped the fabric around his hips. He

walked to the door and beckoned her to join him. "Come along."

Too tired to do much more than blink, she followed him into the bedchamber and headed for the bed.

"Oh no. Not yet. We need to comb your hair first or you will wake with a rat's nest." He pulled her onto a stool in front of the fire and took a brush to her hair with careful attention to avoiding pulling on her locks.

She dozed. The pull of the brush through her hair was hypnotic. She barely registered when he unwrapped her towel and tucked her into bed. It had been a very long day.

\* \* \* \*

She slept like the red-headed temptress she was. Caldur shook his head at how rapidly she entered a deep healing sleep. Less than an hour before, she had been frolicking in his tub and now she was tucked into his sheets. Right where she belonged.

He had noted with satisfaction the sheets had been changed while they had bathed. The red stain was proof Alora had come to him untouched, not that he needed the confirmation, but his men wanted to be sure his new bride was appropriate.

He put on some trousers and left the chamber,

so as not to disturb her. Caldur closed the door just as a flare of light appeared in the centre of his throne room. He had a pretty good idea of who the flare was. "Eylonwy Warder, so lovely to have you here in the dark caverns. What brings you here?"

"Why, Lord Caldur Armerik, I believe you know what brings me here. My granddaughter brings me here." The radiant high elf-warder half-breed moved elegantly to sit in one of the chairs at the great table.

He sat across from her and gestured to one of the startled guards nearby to send for tea. "That would be Alora Negri?"

"You know damned well it is. What do you want with my descendant?" She pounded her fist on the table, a rare display of temper for one so elegant.

"If you are calm, then I will explain." The tea arrived and he poured her a cup as a good host should. "I want her to be mine because I have seen her in my dreams for centuries."

Eylonwy paused with her cup halfway to her lips. "Really? Then why did you grab Sephany?"

He sighed and realized his minion's error would haunt him for quite a while. "Because all I had to go on was that she was a Warder and her appearance. I had no idea another member of her family matched the same description.

“When I first saw Vorsera, I thought she was the woman in my visions and made the arrangements for her to become my bride. When she ran from me, I was furious, but the visions continued. I gradually came to realize I had tried to wed the wrong woman. Modern clothing was my clue and, when fashions in my dreams matched those in the world above, it was time. So I sent my warrior out to collect my bride. It worked to bring her to me, after a fashion.”

The elven Warder drummed her fingers on the table. “So you had a mate dream.”

“Yes.”

“Do you know anything about Alora, aside from her physical reactions to you?”

“She likes to read.” He thought about it for a moment. “What can you tell me?”

Eylonwy glared at Caldur for a moment. “What benefit will it be if I help you here?”

“Alora’s greater happiness. Does she want children?”

“Yes. But she never settled on the female names that are expected of a Warder. She has this strange idea she will have a boy. That almost never happens.”

He had learned the Warders being cursed to only bear girls was part of their history. To yearn to have a little boy was an unanswerable craving. “Did you know that when the Warders were

bound to the curse, they were bound to the races who attended the Great Assembly?" He sipped at his tea and took a cracker.

That caught the elder by surprise. "No. I didn't."

"Indeed. Because they held the meeting by day, on dry land, a few races were not included, and therefore not bound to the curse. Dark elves were one such race."

Light dawned in the elven warder's eyes. "So she can have as much chance of bearing a son with you as with anyone."

"More chance with me, as I come from a line of males with only two females in the last thousand years." He chuckled at the dawning realization in her eyes.

"You do know that if Alora manages to bear a son, your warriors will be overrun with Warders looking to mate." Her lips twitched.

He laughed. "I am sure that they will adjust to the thought. Now, tell me about Alora."

Eylonwy looked at him for a long quiet moment. Her eyes seemed to pierce his soul and judge it. "She is a crafter. She lives modestly and loves to make projects for family and friends. Jewellery, yarns, quilting, sculpture, she does it all, filling the hole left by the loss of her parents with activities. If she can keep busy, she can ease herself into her new life here, with you."

"Do you have any of these things available? I don't." He wasn't happy about not being able to help Alora ease into life in the caverns.

"Take her to the Great Library. She will be delighted to run through the spell books and such. Not being able to use magic has always been a frustration for her. She has desired the ability to actually *use* magic, rather than defend against it." Eylonwy sighed. "The curse of the Warders. One of many." She looked around curiously. "Where is she? I was expecting her to come barrelling in here as soon as I arrived."

He had to grin with smug satisfaction. "She is resting. I believe I tired her out." Memories of their complete joining as well as their play in the bathing chamber ran through his mind. His cock got hard just thinking about taking her again.

Eylonwy eyed him closely. "So you have already consummated the union?"

"We have. We are just as compatible as my dreams indicated."

"Good. Then she will have an easier time getting acclimated to her new surroundings." The elf rose. "I will also have someone collect her hobbies from the human world and purchase a supply of new things for her to play with."

He hesitated before he stood. When he had thought of Alora and her smooth pale skin, all of his blood had run straight to his groin. His

erection was obvious. He rose to his feet and her gaze briefly did the rounds from his head his toes.

Eylonwy's gaze met his. She smirked. "She is in good hands, Caldur. I know it. I just had to come and see for myself." She extended her arms and started to glow. "Just remember, you are now a member of the Warder family. Expect to have visitors. Frequently." As suddenly as she had arrived, she was gone.

Caldur smiled. For a woman who claimed not to be able to use magic, her ability to teleport was amazing. He knew something the Warders had not seemed to have figured out—their restraining curse had worn thin over the centuries of mixing with races who were not part of the original sentencing. Years of blending with goblins, dark elves, nymphs, dryads, mer folk, and a variety of mythological creatures had taken its toll. They were almost free to become a clan of their own again, not that they had ever stopped. The Warders had simply switched to matriarchy instead of patriarchy.

Chuckling quietly, he went to check on Alora. She was sound asleep. It took all of his will power not to wake her and take her, but she was new to love play. He could wait. For two days, he could wait, and then his wait would be over.

## CHAPTER FIVE

“Caldur? Can you let me go now? I need to go use the restroom.” Her heart pounded a staccato beat. It had taken every ounce of her self-control not to scream when she woke and found herself restrained.

“Fine, go. But you have five minutes and then I am coming in after you.” His arms released her from the grip that he had on her.

Alora left the bed, noting with a scowl she was naked, and scooted into the restroom to attend to the call of Mother Nature. She also finger brushed her teeth and gargled to get rid of morning breath. Without her usual accoutrements, it was like camping.

She sighed as she looked at her reflection in the mirror. She really needed a care package from home or at least from her cousins. Home was a very fluid concept right now.

She was tidying her hair when a reflection that wasn't hers came into the mirror. A lovely woman

with chestnut hair winked at her and reached *through* the mirror to deposit a duffel bag.

"Hello, Alora. Eylonwy asked me to drop this off. I believe it contains a few changes of clothing and she mentioned a jar of cream you may want to look for. It seemed to be important."

"Um, that's great. Who are you?"

"Isobel Sterling, head of the half-blood council. I look forward to meeting you under more decorous circumstances, with a little more clothing." The image nodded formally and winked. Alora remembered she was standing in front of the mirror butt naked. The surface was reflective in an instant and she could see what Isobel had seen, a nude, pale woman with a cascade of red hair that didn't cover nearly enough.

"Aw crap." Sighing, she dug through the bag and found the items she had wished for, all the toiletries and some jeans and t-shirts as well as underwear. The jar of cream was only a few inches tall, but it had a tingle to it that marked it as magical.

*After virginity cream.* Oh heck. She knew where that was supposed to go.

"I told you that you only had five minutes. What is that?" Caldur stopped just inside the door and looked at her crouched over the duffel. The magical jar in her hand was what had his

attention.

“A gift from my grandmother.” She fought the urge to hide it behind her back. “Some cream to ease my discomfort.”

“Really. Let me see it.” He strode forward, which was distracting, to say the least. He was naked and aroused. “Hand it over.”

She grudgingly slapped the jar into his palm and walked into the bedroom, leaving him behind. Alora knew what he was going to do as soon as he read the directions and she wanted a head start.

It wasn't enough of a start. She was just reaching for the door of the wardrobe when his arm caught her around the waist and lofted her to the bed. Alora gasped as she landed and he pounced on top of her. “I can do it myself.”

“Oh, but I want to.”

His eyes darkened from ruby to burgundy. Caldur's erection was hard and the drop of pearly white along that black satiny skin made her mouth water. When he opened the jar and scooped out the cream, she expected him to put it inside her, not to rub it along his cock first. She trembled with anticipation. His hand made long slow strokes, covering his hard flesh with the slickness of the cream. *Then* he used his fingers inside her, spreading the cream on her bruised and delicate tissues.

She couldn't help it, she sighed happily as the

sting of their first time faded to nothing. Her breath came faster as he fitted himself to her and slowly thrust inside. The cream made the penetration easy and her sigh turned into a groan as he slid in to the hilt.

"There. I do so love the personal touch." He thrust into her and circled his hips, stroking spots inside her she didn't know she had.

Sparks of sensation shot through her with each slick stroke. He licked at her throat and gnawed gently as his hips worked their magic. Each slow slide of his flesh inside hers brought her closer and closer to the edge of release. When his teeth found purchase on her shoulder, she screamed in reaction as her world exploded in starbursts of sensation. Pain and pleasure blurred together, her body rocked against his as she came.

Caldur pressed into her endlessly as her body milked him. He growled something against her throat and pulled her up, positioning her on his lap as his hands raised and lowered her on his shaft.

Alora met his dark and serious eyes as he rocked them together. The intimacy of the moment was almost too much for her to bear. He was looking inside her soul, as well as being inside her body and in that instant, her control shattered. She screamed as magic broke the bounds of her restraint. She looked to him for

help. He rubbed his finger across her clit, throwing her into another orgasm.

“Let the magic come. Let it run through you, become part of you.”

More magic ran into her and she realized *he* was the source, but something more. He was merely lighting fire to tinder that was filling her body. “I can’t. Warders can’t.”

He paused to speak. “Your family haven’t been full blooded Warders for centuries,” his voice was deep and husky. “You can. Let it come.” He rocked against her until she was whimpering and holding onto him as his body took hers to the heights of pleasure.

She lost track of her climaxes, each stronger than the last, each bringing power to the surface she didn’t know she had.

Caldur finally lay on her and slid his whole body against her with every thrust. Their sweat gleamed on their bodies as they moved together toward their goal. Eyes locked, their mouths met and as Alora’s exhausted body approached release one more time. She knew he was with her. He held her hands above her head, palm to palm as he thrust faster, harder, and deeper than he had before. His back arched and he groaned as his body shook with his release, and with his final thrusts, he took her with him. A soft moan was the only harbinger of her release.

Magic exploded throughout the whole chamber, echoing in the walls, vibrating in the stone. Centuries of non-warder lineage filled with magic were finally free. Alora lay exhausted, but she had a new energy filling her veins. Alora finally got enough energy up to ask a question. "What was that?"

Caldur still pinned her down.

She wasn't complaining.

His laugh was deep, if tired. "If you don't know that that was making love, then I did it wrong."

She didn't even have enough energy to blush. "No. I mean the magic. Was that all you?" The air was heavy with the scent of sex.

"It was mostly you, just a little bit of me before your own instincts took over. You will be a powerful mage, as soon as you learn how to use it."

"That can't be. Warders can't use magic. We are bound not to."

"Curses wear off like many other things. It is the doctrine of the family, so you are never taught to wake your skills. Don't worry. I have plenty of beginner's books and I will make an excellent tutor." Caldur rolled to his side and gathered her against him.

"I can imagine. You have already taught me a few things. How many times did we switch positions?" Her voice was a whisper of sound.

"A few. Six I think. Didn't you like it?"

She ducked her head, "You know very well I liked it. I just hadn't experienced anything like it before and was just wondering."

"Sleep now. You need your rest and we need you to keep healing. That cream did wonders for you though. I don't think you had any pain."

She trailed her fingers along her collarbone, the bite marks clear to the touch of her fingers. "Nothing that I didn't enjoy."

"Good. Now go to sleep. We have much to do when you wake." Caldur feathered his fingers across her brow and, just like that, she slept.

A smack on her ass brought her out of her nap.

"Get up, wash up and dress. It is time to start your studies. I can hardly wait to start your lessons."

*Perky dark elves must die.*

Another hard smack got her out of bed and also a little turned on. A quick look at his face said he knew the effect he had with the impact of his hand on her backside.

Alora stumbled into the bathing chamber, attending to the call of nature, and did a cannonball into the tub. The ache between her thighs was simply due to muscles unused to the workout they had gotten and not damage. It felt wonderful, if a little unusual for her.

She floated on her back after she washed and conditioned her hair, until she remembered part of his edict. *Magic lessons*. They started as soon as she was dry and dressed.

*What was she waiting for?*

Scrambling to her feet, she sloshed free of the water and dried off as fast as she could. She jumped into a bra and panties, then shimmied into jeans and a tee shirt before she entered the bedroom.

“What are you wearing?”

“Normal clothes. Jeans, tee shirt, underwear. Usual stuff.”

“No. That is inappropriate for a lady of the dark elves. You will wear the gowns that I have provided for you.” He scowled.

His usual uniform of black trousers with the bejewelled belt was in place, and the armbands were all he wore on his upper body. Keeping her hands off him was going to be the true test. All that warm skin and all for her. Alora scowled back at him. “They are comfortable.”

“So are the gowns.”

“The gowns are drafty.”

“And I can flip them up and take you anywhere I please.”

“Oh. Fair point. What colour today?”

His eyebrows raised in surprise at her acquiescence. “I thought a nice rich red would

bring out your eyes." He turned to the wardrobe and drew out one of the prettiest dresses she had ever seen. "Put it on."

"No need to give orders. I was already going to put it on." She walked forward to take it and he held it back.

"I like giving you orders. I like it even more when you follow them."

With Caldur watching, she slowly stripped off her modern clothing and then stepped forward to take the gown. He held it away from her. "Arms up." He slipped it over her head and then reached behind her to tie the laces.

They were so tight it took Alora a bit of practice to breathe, but when she looked down, she had to admit the effect was striking. Her breasts were bound up and held tightly, her waist and hips were bound by the layers of fabric, with a gauzy skirt that fell to her still naked feet.

She was going to spin for him, but he grabbed her tightly and pulled her flush with the hard planes of his body. The kiss was punishing, demanding. It was an act of possession and she didn't have any objection to it.

He released her gently, letting her breathe on her own. "Now, off to the library before the sight of you in that gown keeps us here."

"Whatever cranks your tractor."

"Someday you will have to explain to me what

a tractor is and how to crank it, but not today. Today is for magic." He sighed regretfully. Caldur took her hand and pulled her out of the bedroom through the door that led to the throne room. "This was part of the tour that I meant to take you on before, but I was distracted."

"I believe I can admit that we both were."

He grinned down at her. "Indeed."

They walked in silence, hand in hand. Crystal walls lined every path. Alora could feel it now. They had been cut with magic. If what Caldur had said was true, she would be able to use magic and not just channel it. But first she had to learn.

"And here, is the Great Library of the Dark Elves." Caldur stopped in front of two large doors and swung them open.

"Holy heck." Her mouth hung open and she closed it with a snap. It was not a library. It was a football field with twenty foot ceilings. The entire space covered with books and row upon row of shelves. "Can I live here?"

"No. But you can visit often." He led her to a row of stacks and gestured to the books around him. "This is the beginner spell book section." Caldur crossed to the wall and picked out a few selections. "You should start with this one. It will give you the most visible results."

Alora took the book and wandered over to tables that seemed designed for that purpose.

Caldur took a seat nearby and flipped through some of the books, marking pages and humming absently to himself. "Call me if you need me."

Pulling the covers of the tome open, she sighed and started from the beginning, determined to get the hang of channelling whatever power she had.

## CHAPTER SIX

Fire was hard. It was the first of the elements that a magic user had to master before they could proceed with the others—water, air and earth. It was a good thing Caldur was standing by to put out her little blazes. “I am never going to get this right.”

“You will. It is the hardest to master, but the most useful of the elements. I should never have been standing so close to you on your first try.” His arm bore the blisters of the first flames she had conjured, but it didn’t stop him from encouraging her to try again and again and again.

Alora sighed and pushed the book away from her. “But fire isn’t in me. I don’t feel connected to it. Air and water, those call me.”

“You have more fire in you than you think. But try water.” He slid an empty cup to her and nodded for her to use it as her focus.

“Okay and take the other books off in case I flood the table.”

"I doubt that you will. Most can only draw a few tablespoons at the most."

"Please?"

"Very well." He flicked his fingers and the books and candelabra hovered inches above the table.

"Thank you. Show off." Alora turned her focus to the charm, the chant and the gesture that would help her to direct her magic. Water. To call water, have pure cool thoughts. Think of the words, whisper them in your mind. Focus on the vessel and bring the thoughts, the whisper and the magic together.

The centre of the wooden cup darkened and a puddle formed in it. She pulled more magic in and whispered it into the cup with her mind. The water level rose slowly and steadily. She stopped the flow when the cup was halfway full. Her breath rippled the surface and she looked up with satisfaction. "Ta-da." She held up the cup and showed her tutor.

His surprise was evident. "I humbly apologize. I didn't think you would be able to do it. I stand corrected. Excellent control."

She snickered. "My family always said I was a control freak."

Caldur took the cup from her and set it on the table, then took her into his arms. "Control is never a waste. And I find it an endearing quality. I

look forward to breaking your control at the earliest opportunity." The last sentence was said in a dark whisper near her ear. Her whole body tensed and shivered at the promise in those few words.

"But now it is time for lunch and you have visitors." He kept his grip on her by slipping an arm around her and herding her to the door. "Magic lessons will wait until this afternoon."

Visitors? Who could they be? From the face in the mirror and the care package, she knew Eylonwy had popped in to assess her status, but who else would make the journey into the depths of Realm? "How do you know I have visitors?"

"The messenger came to tell us. You were concentrating and he kept his distance. Berendur is no fool." He kept her moving forward until they entered the Great Hall.

There was a couple waiting with a large pile of suitcases and Alora had no idea who they were. "Um, hello?"

"Hello Lady Alora, Lord Caldur. I am Graylin Treel, daughter of Arabel, grudging mate of Rikard." The woman smiled and bowed effortlessly.

The man glared at her for a moment. "And I am Rikard, the long suffering. Mate to the dragon of the half blood club."

Caldur strode forward to shake Rikard's hand

and bow to Graylin. "Be welcome in my realm."

Everyone relaxed when those words were finally spoken. It was as if they had been holding their breath.

Graylin sat at the table and gestured for Alora to join her. "Eylonwy sent me here to bring your possessions to your new home. Dragons make moving easier."

Alora nodded. "Thank you. I am most grateful for my stuff."

"Oh. You are welcome. I have been wanting to see dark elves for myself. I couldn't believe what they were described to be." She looked around with a predatory eye and Alora got a little irritated when her avaricious gaze fell on Caldur.

"Yes, they are quite attractive, but you have your own, so stop looking at mine." Unthinking, she put her hands on the table, exposing the filigree cuffs.

The dragon's eyes immediately homed in on the shiny object. "Those are quite pretty. Can I see them?"

Alora extended her arm for the female to look. "No. They don't come off."

"Fascinating. Rikard would like those. He chains me up at every opportunity."

"Oh. No chains with these. I think they are linked to Caldur. He thinks and they move or lock in place."

"Oh, that does sound like fun." Graylin smiled, a calm coming over her. "Sorry about the frenetic mood, but being pregnant isn't agreeing with my being calm and controlled."

"Oh, you're going to have a baby? Congratulations." Babies were always welcome in her family. The Warders loved their little ones and the showers that followed.

Graylin smiled and patted her abdomen. "Yup. A tiny little bossy dragon growing here. And only eighteen more months to wait."

"Ah. Extended gestation. Sorry about that."

"Don't be. I am a full blooded dragon. I am built for this. But these early changes are driving me batty. I am either bitchy or horny or both. It's driving Rikard nuts." She sighed and stretched. "Anyway, your grandma asked me to bring you all this stuff and Isobel said hello again. Eylonwy also included some crafting supplies for you to occupy your time."

"Great. Thanks." Alora deliberately didn't mention her new hobby. Until she got a grip on using magic, she wasn't showing anyone.

Rikard came up behind his mate and rubbed her shoulders. "I think, dear Graylin, that we should leave this newly mated couple to a bit of privacy."

"You? Talking about privacy? Yeesh. At the last council meeting you almost took me up against a

wall." Graylin stood and bitched at him the whole time.

"You were in heat and, if I hadn't taken you then, you would have attracted a few more dragons. I didn't want to kill anyone that day." He escorted his mate out through one of the open corridors. "It was nice meeting you, Alora. See you soon."

Just like that, Alora was alone again in the realm of the dark elves. "That was interesting."

Caldur nodded and pulled her up so that she rested against him, his arms loosely around her. "Apparently, your family wants you to settle down here as rapidly as possible."

"I wish they would just let me alone to get used to you and used to the caverns. Am I getting boots today?"

"The bootmaker will be here in a few hours. What do you want to do until then?" He rubbed his chin against the top of her head. "More magic?"

"I think that I will let magic rest for the day and simply spend it in your arms." Her own arms wrapped around him and stroked his back, loving the warm flesh under her palms.

He lifted her off her feet and carried her to their room where the freshly made bed beckoned. Caldur lay down, cuddling her in his arms and sighed heavily. "For now, this is all the magic I

need.”

Alora smiled. She had her elf, he had her and together they just might make a life together.

## AUTHOR'S NOTE

The *Warder's Elf* continues a thread from the *Warder's Unicorn*. Alora and Caldur will definitely appear in *The Warder's Merman* as well as the other two books that will complete the *Warder's* series.

That's right. Only three more books and I will stop writing about the *Warder* family. Well, mostly. One or two may slip through.

Thanks for reading!

*Viola Grace*

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Viola Grace was born in Manitoba, Canada where she still resides today. She really likes it there.

She has no pets and can barely keep sea monkeys alive for a reasonable amount of time. Her line of day job tends to be analytical which leaves her mind hopping to weave stories. No co-worker is safe from her character analysis.

In keeping with busy hands are happy hands, her hobbies have included cross-stitch, needlepoint, quilting, costuming, cake decorating, baking, cooking, metal work, beading, sculpting, painting, doll making, henna tattoos, chain mail, and a few others that have been forgotten. It is quite often that these hobbies make their way into her tales.

Viola's fetishes include boots and corsetry, and her greatest weakness is her uncontrollable blush.

Her writing actively pursues the Happily Ever After that so rarely occurs in nature. It is an admirable thing and something that we should all strive for. To find one that we truly like, as well as love.

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