



Lust Bites

HEALING HARTLEY

Ann Cory

Healing Hartley
by Ann Cory

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Healing Hartley

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Warning: This book contains sexually explicit content which is only suitable for mature readers. This story has been rated *Total-e-burning*.

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Vengeful Vixens

HEALING HARTLEY

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Dedication

For everyone with open hearts and open minds

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Chapter One

Hartley woke from her restless sleep with a renewed sense of self. Today she would carry out the plan she'd spent a year readying for. A plan to once and for all put an end to the power *he* had held over her for far too long.

Delicious heat radiated from the two bodies sidled up close on either side of her. Their breath warm and slow against her shoulders, cocks nestled in soft erections against her thighs. Mornings had become interesting since she found herself in their home. Near death, she'd reached out with her mind, hoping someone, anyone, would hear. And they had. Two male witches with the power to shape-shift at will. They'd answered her call and spirited her away on their black raven wings, rescuing her from the man who had betrayed her.

She looked to her right where Raithe lay, his face set in a peaceful repose. A faint shadow of stubble bordered his full, pale lips. Long, black hair draped across his cheek and came to a tangled mass along his muscular chest and shoulder. He'd established himself in the beginning as her fierce protector and loyal seducer. Insisted that he would save himself only for her and be at her beckon call. His powers sent her to new heights that allowed her to experience both a body and mind fuck that kept her senses ablaze around him.

Raithe's intuitive gift helped her stay grounded at the right times, but he knew when she craved escape.

A deep sigh emitted from his throat, and he rested his hand on her belly. In that instant, her body awakened with

desire. Her mouth twitched at the thought of running her tongue along his rich, tawny skin. The handsome beast looked even more appetising this morning. But it wasn't just one man who made her body burn.

Hartley switched her gaze to Faramir and noticed the wicked smile fixed on his lips, no doubt the result of a racy dream. It was a rare moment when sex didn't occupy his mind. She watched him sleep and let her gaze travel along his high cheekbones, mocha-coloured skin, smooth chest and well-defined arms. His aura exuded a potent sexuality. He was a machine with a libido that didn't stop. Not that she ever complained. A woman would be a fool to find fault with being sandwiched between two very giving and doting lovers.

Hartley rested her head comfortably on the pillow and stared at the ceiling, willing them to wake up. With their hands on her body, she couldn't think straight, and she had a big day planned. They'd somehow, unknowingly, charged her very core with electricity and made her want sex like she would die if she didn't have it soon. Impatience gnawed at her. For now, she'd have to wait, captive between the two men who'd taught her how to unleash her inner witch, reclaim her natural gifts and restore her trust in love.

Raithe stirred and pulled into her, the tip of his cock harder than it had been moments ago. "I sense a change in the air," he murmured, his deep voice vibrating through her.

"Today is the day," she stated with absolute certainty.

Faramir woke, too, and smoothed his hand along her arm. "Are you nervous, love?"

She sighed. "I'd be lying if I said no."

"Just know that you are at your strongest," Raithe soothed. "You've worked hard to get where you are. You're one step closer to being truly healed."

She nodded, his words empowering her. "Yes, but without your guidance and support, I'd be lost. I'm lucky to have you both in my life."

Raithe propped up on his elbow, his hair splaying along his chest. "Remember, should you need us, we'll be there. All you have to do is call."

Much as she appreciated the encouragement, other things demanded attention at the moment. "Right now, I'm more preoccupied with the need growing between my thighs."

Faramir leaned in and cupped her breast. "I think we have a known cure for that need."

His cock thrummed hard against her hip. Raithe cupped her other breast, and simultaneously, they suckled her nipples. Slow and drawn out at first. Then they nipped and tugged at her hardened buds with intense hunger. Her head spun at the rush of emotions shooting through her. She fisted her hands through their hair, writhing between them, almost crushing her breasts into their faces. Heat travelled up her body and spread along her neck. Oh God, she wanted them.

"Yes, more," she moaned. "Please."

"All in good time," Raithe whispered and began to chant, his dark, sensuous voice conjuring exotic images for an incredible mind fuck. His witch powers allowed him to tap into old fantasies she'd long since forgotten. Her legs pressed firm together, her pussy flooded.

Raithe and Faramir climbed off the bed and stood a few feet away, in all their naked glory. Bodies of sin she could never seem to get enough of. She waited for what would come next. A series of unexpected surprises that would take her breath away. Their sultry eyes stared at her intently while their lips uttered words she didn't know.

As if by magic, her arms lifted above her head. An unseen force bound her hands with strips of leather and secured them to the headboard. Hartley pulled against the bonds to be sure they were secure. To her relief, they were. With her movements restricted she'd be free to enjoy, remaining open and responsive. She liked it better than being blindfolded.

Invisible fingers traced between her thighs, moving up one side and down the other. Feather light flicks against her clit made her cry out. She arched her back and tilted her pelvis. Couldn't they see the liquid heat streaking the sheets? Didn't they smell her yearning?

"More, please more," she begged.

Through the dark veil of her lashes she eyed their big, thick erections. How long would they torture her with their invisible touch?

"You're thinking too much," Raithe insisted. "Lay back and let go. You'll have us soon enough."

"Eager beauty," Faramir teased.

She swivelled her hips and parted her thighs. She wanted them to see what they were turning away. Her nipples were beaded tight, begging for a tug of teeth or a swipe of the tongue. Wouldn't anyone put her out of her misery?

Raithe shook his head. "Okay, that's it."

"What?" she asked with the hope of sounding innocent.

"You're doing it again."

The impatience in his voice was unmistakable. She needed to focus on the pleasure, not how bad she wanted to come. Hartley exhaled a frustrated sigh. She quieted her mind and let them take her to the next level.

"See your fantasies come to life," Raithe coaxed.

"Remember, sex is more than a physical act."

Her mind cleared, and a blanket of warmth caressed her, wrapping her body in a threshold of eroticism. Through half-glazed eyes, she saw many dark forms move around her. Their faces were blurred, but she could smell their muskiness. Her body opened up, theirs for the taking. The sheer desire beckoned from between her legs with an intangible force. It was an itch she couldn't scratch alone, and she willed them to offer relief.

As if in answer, their hands travelled all over her body, inspecting crevices and exploring curves. Where their fingers touched her body ignited. Fire spread from her toes to her face and stirred an insatiable appetite. The bed was a plate, and she was on the menu, pleading to be sampled anywhere that gave her a moment of delight. Each of her senses was on high. She could taste the salt of their sweat, hear the rasp in their breath, and smell the heady scent of their sex. She could see their forms tend to her body, and most of all feel the wild, wicked lust raging through her.

Hartley smiled while the fantasy continued to play out, aware both Raithe and Faramir looked on. She knew they'd hold back until they couldn't stand it any longer.

Her body lifted off the bed a few inches and hung suspended in the air. The leather bonds released from around her wrists. Hartley held her breath in anticipation.

Fingers she couldn't see, but could feel, ran up and down her legs, inching near the torrid slit between her thighs. Tiny pings of pleasure battered her body. The closer towards her clit they stroked, the harder her legs quaked.

"Yes," she whispered.

Hartley strained to see their faces. "Please, let me see you."

Slowly the haze cleared, and their bodies materialised. She drew in her breath as she saw they were all identical. Chiselled naked bodies that flexed and stretched beautifully. They each had long, dark hair that hung straight with stray strands brushing against their bronze pecs. Their cocks were raised and larger than any she'd ever seen or had inside her. Vibrant violet eyes stared, lips set in a seductive smile. Phallic symbols of horns adorned their foreheads, painted in bright red. They all seemed to float and move about her like wisps of smoke.

She watched their mouths draw closer to her inner thighs. A tongue slithered and rolled inside her pussy, lapping at the dampness. Her nipples stood erect as one of the horns slipped into her drenched slit and found her G-spot. Thick liquid warmed her thighs, a welcomed heat to her bewildered mind. Her body was charged. Fingers, lips, teeth and mouths kissed, suckled, probed and manipulated her into a frenzied state. One man floated above her, his enormous cock dangling in front of her eager lips.

"You'll suck it until I say otherwise," he demanded then shifted his body into a sixty-nine position, burying his face between her legs.

Hartley opened her mouth wide and welcomed his tantalising sweetness. He tasted divine. She felt him plough his expert fingers and tongue inside her while another man slid his fingers inside her ass. They flicked their tongues along her nipples and took turns biting them. Every part of her was filled, and she was on sensory overload.

An orgasm drew close. Her legs trembled with wild abandon. Another large horn slid into her pussy and plunged in and out of her. It felt bigger than anything she'd ever taken in. The luscious friction hit her clit just so, and her belly clenched.

Deep, sensuous voices filled the room. *Come now. Come now. Come now.*

The erotic chant gave her the extra push she needed for release. Her body jolted from the fierce explosion between her legs. Eyes closed, she cried out in ecstasy. Her toes curled while one spasm after another overtook her.

In a gentle whoosh, she fell to the bed. Her eyelids fluttered open, and she smiled. Instead of the fantasy men, Raithe ravaged her clit with his tongue while Faramir prodded his fingers along her tight anal hole.

Her body trembled. They were never content with her having only one orgasm.

"Take me boys," she pleaded.

Raithe lay beside her and pulled her onto him, his cock pressed firm between her ass cheeks. The leather straps once again bound her wrists.

"You'll take me all the way in," he ordered.

Her pulse escalated. "Yes," she moaned.

Without hesitation, his cock filled her anus, inch by bliss-filled inch. His fingers reached around her and hooked her nipples tight. Faramir climbed onto the bed and winked.

"You look hot, love," he stated with a heavy-lidded gaze.

Straddled over her, he rested his cock at her slit.

"Ready for me?"

She bit her lip, nodding, readying for the scintillating feel of both their cocks driving inside her most sacred places. In a quick thrust, Faramir splayed the folds of her pussy wide apart. Raithe gripped her hips and worked her from behind. The delicious friction of his thick shaft against her anal hole was almost too much to handle. Together they filled her, and made her feel like the most beautiful and loved woman in the world. She imagined their cocks stroking against one another. Duelling for attention.

"Tell us what you want, love," Faramir prompted, sweat trickling alongside his face.

Breathless, she blurted out, "More. Please give me more."

"More of what," Raithe grunted. "We love to hear the words from your lips."

All hope of sounding like a lady went by the wayside. If she didn't tell them, they'd draw out the orgasm until she begged for it. The sweet need for release motivated her. "I want you to fuck me harder, faster, deeper," she cried. "Just

don't stop." She wanted to add the word *ever* to the end, but decided that sounded too presumptuous.

"Our ... pleasure ... love," Faramir said between laboured breaths.

Their bodies moved in one continuous motion to the drumming of their pulses. Each growl, moan and whimper pinged along the walls—music to her ears. This moment of togetherness meant the world to her. She could never leave them. They'd become her world. This was home.

In a matter of minutes, they brought her to a second raging orgasm. Its intensity surprised her. As she cried out, they shot their white heat into her, bellowing in unison. The leather bonds disappeared, and she let her arms rest along the pillow.

After a few rapid thrusts, Raithe and Faramir withdrew their cocks and settled on either side of her, encircling her in their arms. Hartley enjoyed this time with their soft caresses and tender whispers. Bodies warm and sweat-coated. She always felt safe between them. How she wished they would accompany her today.

"You know how to treat a girl well."

Faramir kissed her shoulder. "We only did what you asked, love."

"You're so demanding," Raithe added with a playful smile.

"Then you are both great listeners." She stretched her limbs and groaned. "While I'd much rather lay here with you two for the remainder of the day, I have to get ready for..." Hartley didn't know how to finish the sentence. She had to

get ready to exact revenge? She had to get ready to teach an ex-lover the lesson of a lifetime?

Raithe seemed to read her thoughts. "We understand. This is your day. We only wanted to make the morning a little more memorable."

And memorable it was.

"Well you succeeded in more ways than one." With a reluctant sigh, Hartley slid from the bed, her body well-fucked and sated. She made her way down the hall and into the alcove, her special place where she practised magic.

* * * *

Raithe watched Hartley's beautiful form rise from the bed. Her dark chocolate hair swung along her waist, the sheet draped across her body like a Greek goddess. He could stare into her cinnamon-brown eyes forever, and while he'd never want her to stay for him, he cringed at the thought of ever losing her. It made his desire to fully pleasure her even more important. He worried the novelty of sharing a bed and home with two men would wear off.

The sound of her whispered sighs reverberated in his ears. Such heavenly sounds. He rested his fingers beneath his nose and inhaled the honey-like scent that still lingered from her pussy.

"I recognise that look in your eyes," his friend murmured.

He furrowed a brow. "How's that?"

"You're worried."

"And you're not?"

"She's nervous, but she'll do fine," Faramir reasoned.

Raithe stood and covered up in a robe. "You think so?"

"Yes. She has good teachers. Besides, you'll make yourself sick if you keep on."

"I only want her to be happy." He shrugged. "Remember when she first came here? Like a little lost puppy. That monster did a number on her. I didn't think she'd ever recover from the trauma."

Faramir nodded. "We're good for her. At any rate, I've said it before. I can whip up something to take care of that cretin anytime. Just say the word and it's done."

"Part of her healing is doing it on her own." Raithe rubbed the back of his neck to ease the tension. "We can't meddle. Besides, I swore an oath when I became a witch to not use my magic to harm."

His friend chuckled. "That was stupid."

"We differ in our witchcraft ethics."

"Look. I want her free of him as much as you. After today, she will be."

Raithe put his hand on Faramir's shoulder. "I'm sure you're right. Maybe some food in my stomach will help ease my concerns. Want me to cook you something?"

"Tempting, but I'm going to go run off this lingering energy, otherwise I'm going to find Hartley and seduce her again."

His friend never ceased to amaze him. "How do you have the stamina to have sex so many times in a single day?"

"It's a secret spell that I refuse to share," Faramir explained with a glint in his eye. "It would likely go against your oath anyways."

Raithe shook his head. "Don't tell me you bewitched your cock?"

"Hey, a man has needs. I'll be back in an hour."

He groaned. "You're insufferable."

"And you're whipped."

Raithe chuckled to himself and strode to the kitchen. Leave it to Faramir to play around with the rules of witchcraft. His long-time friend didn't quite grasp the concept of using powers sparingly and only when needed. He also hadn't developed his mental powers as strongly either. One day he'd learn. Though the same age as Raithe, Faramir had a boyish side, and his needs tended to come first. In a nutshell, they were opposites.

He gathered some ingredients from the cupboards and grabbed a mixing bowl. Raithe wondered if maybe he *was* too serious, too set in his ways. Once Hartley had come along, he couldn't look at another woman, much less think about being with one. His sole purpose turned to helping her heal. The young woman had been in a fragile state, her spirit broken, along with her heart. He hoped that between him and Faramir all of her needs, both in and out of the bedroom, would be satisfied.

With ease, he cracked a few eggs into the bowl, added some herbs and poured everything into a pan. To prove he had some fun left in him, he snapped his fingers and the logs lit. Raithe gave himself a mental pat on the shoulder. If only life could be so easy.

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His mind drifted back to Hartley and her state of mind. She'd be leaving soon, and he wanted to wish her well. Food first then he'd check on her.

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Chapter Two

Hartley tightly rolled the scroll then lit one end with a candle. She dropped some of the ashes into a small copper pot and let the rest burn in her cauldron. The scroll was of little use to her now. She'd memorised the words. It announced King Tatian's foolish challenge to all the warriors in the surrounding lands. He believed no one could best him in a sword fight and aimed to prove it this afternoon. Last she'd heard, ten of the strongest and most courageous men to walk the earth had accepted the challenge. She knew what Tatian was capable of, but he didn't know the surprise she had in store for him.

Her tongue lay at the corner of her mouth as she filled the copper pot with a layer of hearty soil and dropped in one tiny seed. It was white as the moon and round in shape. She covered the seed with the remaining soil and gently pressed it down. A smile crossed her face as she added a drop of water and set it on the windowsill. In an hour, it would bloom into a small tree with a single red bud.

Hartley shuddered as an old memory replayed itself. Tatian, with his hands wrapped tight around her neck, blocking off her air. In that moment everything changed. All the love and admiration for him had drained from her body, replaced with a bitter chill. She knew better than to plead or beg him to spare her. He'd made the decision, and there was no going back. She'd seen a stranger reflected in his eyes,

not the man she had bedded and come to love. Nothing would ever get that back.

She couldn't forgive him or pretend it didn't happen, which left only one thing to do. Her mother had warned her about using witchcraft around men, especially those of noble blood. She said it threatened them, and Hartley found it to be true. All her years of learning spells and how to heal the sick were wasted. She'd given them up for a love that had been false.

For Tatian, she'd become someone without a voice. Without an opinion until she couldn't stand it anymore. The very people the king swore to protect were left poor, sick, and without the chance to better themselves. And it was by order of the king himself. Maybe she should have stayed silent. If she had, she might have not found out his true persona. She might not have witnessed, firsthand, the evil that resided inside him.

Moments before death, she'd succumbed to the darkness and reached out with her mind, using her abilities to still her heartbeat, quiet her breath and go into a silent slumber, with the trust someone would revive her.

Not only had Faramir and Raithe revived her, they'd allowed her to stay in their home, treating her like a queen.

For a year, she'd done her best to temper the anger that festered inside. As a witch, it wasn't her desire to hurt others. But she believed in the three-fold law of magic. She knew that using her powers and energy today would result in that power coming back to her three times the level it was sent out. Karma would come back to haunt him, and she'd figured out a way to help that karma along.

Tension seeped into her shoulders, and she knew a bath was in order. For her to succeed today, she'd need to be calm and collected. Anything else would draw suspicion. In the next room was the bathhouse with a large round window, surrounded by brilliant wildflowers. Sunlight crept in between the foliage and warmed the air. A large tub sat near the window, the tile surrounding it decked with coloured pebbles. She pumped the handle of the faucet until the tub was full and stirred her finger around inside the water, using her magic to heat it.

When it felt right, she climbed in and tried to relax.

Unfortunately, her mind went everywhere at once, and she doubted herself all over again. Why couldn't she have the gift of foresight? At least, she would know what fate had in store for her. What if Tatian recognised her? What if he called her bluff? What if this time he succeeded in killing her?

Hartley put her hands to her head to quiet the panic.

"Sounds like too many voices talking at once," Raithe called out.

She glanced up and watched him enter the room.

Hartley shook her head. "Damn you for being able to read my mind. Can't a girl have any privacy?"

His eyes sparkled against the sunlight. "I only heard a small portion. You know I'd never invade your headspace. I'm extra sensitive to your thoughts when they weaken you."

She sighed. "I know. If you hadn't heard my thoughts the first time, I'd be dead now."

A flash of pain crossed his face. "Don't say that."

"It's true. You've no idea how grateful I am to you and Faramir for taking me in."

Raithe kneeled behind her and draped her hair to one side. She didn't even flinch when his hands massaged her neck. Hartley trusted him implicitly. "Nonsense. We didn't take you in. We gave you a safe haven to call home. While we reside together, you're free to leave at any time, if you should desire."

She gave him a sharp look over her shoulder. "What, no resistance? No begging me to stay?"

His chuckle resounded around the room. "I can say that with confidence because I sense your contentment here."

"It's hard not to be content. I'm spoiled. More so than I deserve."

Raithe took her chin in his hand and thumbed her lower lip. "You deserve the world, and however I can deliver that world to you, I will."

Her body quaked at the intensity of his stare. He could make love to her with his seductive gaze. He could manipulate her body without physical touch. He could sate her with words that maximised the sensations. When he added the physical touch, she found herself opened in ways unimaginable.

Her nipples hardened at the thought of his lips wrapped around them. After the decadent morning, how was it possible she could want more?

Raithe stood and let his robe fall to the floor.

"Is there room in there for me," he asked, his eyes beautiful orbs of lust.

She smiled at his full erection and nodded.

He slid into the bathtub and pulled her onto his lap. With ease his cock pushed into her pussy. She rested her back against his powerful chest and sighed. Raithe quietly chanted and bubbles started to rise in the water. He enveloped her in his arms and wrapped his fingers tight around her nipples. She eyed the corded muscles in his arms and loved the way they flexed.

Lips resting against her ear, he whispered softly. "I'm going to make you come hard without a single thrust, so be ready. Now close your eyes."

Hartley felt his cock swell inside her pussy, and she did as he said.

"Now imagine my cock tripled in size. Pulsing inside you. Feel the bubbles rise and tap against your clit, one after another like hundreds of tiny tongues."

She fought the urge to grind her hips. This was his show, and he called the shots.

He pinched her nipples harder, twisting them to a place between pleasure and pain. "Feel the bubbles rise and bead against your nipples. Flicking them intensely until you squirm."

Her belly tightened at the thought of all her sensitive spots being coaxed into submission.

"Fuck me with your words," she moaned. "Make me come hard."

Raithe clenched his jaw. He loved the feel of her soft, wet body against his and revelled in the scent of her arousal as breathy gasps and moans released from her lips.

His fingers squeezed her nipples, the taut beads hard as pebbles. Her pussy clenched his cock tight, putting it into a vice-like grip. He loved her taste and could eat her out for days. It entranced him to watch the way her body worked when he and Faramir seduced her. He'd loll his tongue around her clit and finger her soft folds until her juices ran. She was responsive and had an appetite to try new ways of intimacy. He'd never betray her trust.

The bubbles continued to rise in the water and he lowered a hand between her legs.

"Do you want my fingers to rub your clit?"

He felt her muscles tense.

"Yes," she gurgled.

Raithe rested his chin along her neck and breathed in her essence. Her breasts bobbed in the water, so round and full.

"Take your nipple to your lips and suckle it the way Faramir and I do."

In fascination, he watched her tongue slink along the puckered flesh then her mouth closed over it. At the same time, he jiggled her clit. Her body reacted in a tremendous jolt. If she moved like that again, he'd climax sooner than planned.

"Easy," he whispered into her ear and nibbled along her neck.

She released her nipple and placed her hand on his.

"I love the way your words move me, but I want to ride your cock. Please."

Raithe heard the urgency in her voice and refused to make her wait.

He nodded. "Yes, but turn around so I can watch you come."

Hartley moved swiftly and wrapped her legs around his waist. He gripped her bottom and slid a finger into her anus.

"Oh yes," she cried and went to town on his cock.

He gazed into her eyes, watching her lashes flutter and lids go half-mast. A brilliant glow exuded from her face, and her pink lips curled back.

"You're beautiful."

Her nipples raked against his chest the faster she rode him.

"I'm close," she gasped, and he helped keep up the momentum with his hands.

Raithe knew he'd climax soon but worked to keep it at bay. Her pleasure came first, always.

"Right there," she moaned. "Right there, now, now, faster."

He thrust his hips hard, driving her into him. Water splashed between them and spilled onto the floor. She smiled for a split second, face flushed, then cried out. The rhythmic clenching of her pussy around his cock broke away the last of his willpower. A deep rumble vibrated from his chest and erupted into the air. His heat filled her until he had nothing left.

She let out a deep breath and rested against him. "Amazing."

He held her tight through the last of her shudders and kissed the top of her head. "Just like you."

* * * *

The bubbles disappeared, but the water remained warm. Hartley stared out the window at the vibrant flowers. She could stay forever in this moment. It was such a contrast to what the rest of her day had to offer. "You know just the right ways to free me of my restless thoughts."

"As I said this morning, you're almost healed. You should think back over this past year and how much progress you've made. I'm proud of you, and so is Faramir. The only person left to convince is you."

She wrapped her fingers around her hair and wrung out the water. "One minute I feel strong, and the next I'm scared. Why can't I find a happy medium?"

"What you feel is normal. You're consumed by all the things that *might* happen. You won't know what *will* happen until you get there. Keep telling yourself you're ready, and soon enough, you'll believe it."

"But that's the thing. I want this so bad, I can taste it."

He stroked her back. "Then there you go."

"I'm still afraid."

"It's okay to be afraid. Use it to your advantage."

Hartley stepped out of the tub and grabbed a towel from the black iron rung.

Raithe climbed out and wrapped one around his tapered waist. "Did you want me to help dry you?"

"Not a chance." She laughed and took a step away. "You'll excite me all over again."

His brow arched. "Someone has an insatiable appetite today. And for once it's not Faramir."

She couldn't figure out why her craving was so intense. "I don't know what's wrong with me. My body feels like it's on fire. It seems nothing can temper these flames."

"It makes sense."

Her lips turned to a pout. "Not to me."

He chuckled. "You're empowered today. The magic is strong inside you. All your senses and emotions are on overload."

"So I'll never be satisfied until I go take care of this?"

He shrugged. "It's hard to say. You might ride that adrenaline rush for days."

"Then I'd better hide myself away, or I'll tire you boys out."

Raithe pulled the towel from her hands. "How about one more for the road?"

Before she could ask what that meant, he had the towel pressed against her clit.

"What are you—"

With only a few swift strokes of the textured fabric, she climaxed again. Hard. She reached for him to steady herself.

A sheepish grin spread across his face. "Better?"

"I never knew I could orgasm so quickly."

"I'm hoping it will suffice until you return."

"It's going to have to." Hartley wanted to stay positive, but she couldn't. Her lips twitched. "What if I fail? What happens if he recognises me right away?"

"Do you want us to accompany you today? We will, you know. We can stay hidden or show ourselves. Whichever makes you more comfortable."

She resisted the temptation to say yes, though she wanted to. What she needed was to stop allowing Tatian to cause her fear. "No, but thank you for offering. I need to do this alone."

Raithe cocked his head to the side. "You're sure?"

"Yes."

"Very well, then I'll leave you to prepare yourself. Do a grounding exercise first. It will help your focus."

She nodded. "I will."

Hartley watched him leave then raised her arms upward. Eyes closed, she took several deep breaths in and let them out slowly to the count of five. She envisioned herself as a tree with a strong trunk and even stronger roots. After another few breaths, she took all the negative energy surrounding her and pushed it through her arms, down her body, and out her feet, imagining those thoughts passing through the roots underground, exiting her completely. She'd used this method often in the beginning to protect herself and soothe her fears.

When she felt centred, she took in another deep breath and opened her eyes. Like always, she found herself stronger and ready to tackle anything.

Hartley took her time getting dressed in a plain black dress that swished around her ankles when she moved. The fit didn't flatter her figure, but it wasn't her intention to be seen in that way. She put on her cloak, tied the string around her collar, and pulled the hood forward so the velvet hem concealed her eyes. Finally, she grabbed the copper pot from the alcove.

In the foyer, she heard Raithe and Faramir talking. They quieted when she entered. "Do I look all right?"

Faramir nodded. "You look like a woman on a mission, love. A vengeful vixen at that."

She shook her head. Leave it to him to add drama to any situation. "You exaggerate."

"No, your aura is strong," he continued, "and you have a noticeable glow—"

"I might have had something to do with that glow," Raithe interrupted, his cheeks stained red.

Faramir crossed his arms. "What the hell? You two went at it again? And without me?"

"Twice, actually," Raithe gloated. "But hey, you were out running off that sexual energy."

Faramir tapped his foot and swung his gaze from one to the other. "Well, I'm here now, and horny as hell. The run didn't do a thing."

Hartley laughed. "When aren't you in the mood? Tempted as I am, I must be on my way. Wish me luck."

Raithe waved his hand. "You don't need it. You'll do fine. Keep your head up and trust your instincts."

She walked out the door and quickened her pace along the stone pathway. "I can do this," she said aloud. "It's now or never."

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Chapter Three

King Tatian paced inside his palace, restless to shed blood. It amused him how simple it was to entertain the townspeople. They loved violence. Ate it up like it was their only meal and even brought their children. They liked the sight of death, and he enjoyed the victory of defeat. It would make the ungrateful peasants respect him more to see blood on his sword. Their king. Their ruler. And they would bow down to him. Kiss his feet if he so desired.

Yes, things would go according to plan. He just wished the nagging feeling of some sort of dread that he'd woken with would disappear. It was as if something hung over him, some dark cloud. His dreams had been strange, too, but he blamed the large quantities of wine he'd downed beforehand.

Tatian sauntered to the window and peered out. Already a large crowd formed around the stage. Miles of townspeople littered his view. He'd give them a show of the likes they'd never seen before. They would never again question the power he held. Without it, he was nothing. Tatian wanted to be known as the greatest ruler of the thirteenth century and would kill anyone who stood in his way. He'd show all those who ever doubted his skill with a sword. His father would turn over in his grave if he knew the things Tatian had done and how he ran the kingdom, but Tatian didn't much care. No one told him what to do. They didn't dare.

A heavy knock at the door drew his thoughts back.

"Enter," he bellowed.

One of his loyal guards stepped in and bowed. "My Lord, the people await your presence."

He raised his chin. "Then I shall give them what they want."

And in return, they would hand over every last penny or risk death, he thought to himself. They'd learn to fear him and do whatever he said.

Tatian grabbed his sword. "Let the games begin."

* * * *

Hartley took her time walking to the town square with the copper pot well hidden beneath the folds of her cloak. Excitement crackled in the air as the people gathered and wagered who would best the king. She could only imagine how many times he'd spied from the window, in awe of the sheer number of people who had come to watch.

With all that had taken place, she found it difficult to remember what she'd ever seen in him. At this point, she didn't care. From here on out, he'd never forget her again.

She made her way through the large crowd to the front and waited. A great stage had been constructed where the duels would take place so all could see. For a brief moment, she faltered, but Raithe's words of encouragement echoed in her mind. It was on this day a year ago that her world changed. Today, she vowed justice.

Raithe paced the foyer. He didn't question Hartley's strength. She was stronger than any woman he knew. She had to be after what she'd experienced. His concern extended

to Tatian and his rumoured temper. The man had started more wars and spilled more blood than any reigning king.

In his gut, Raithe felt the same tremors of uncertainty that pulsed in her veins. It tore up his nerves and made his hands shake. In his mind, he heard the verbal battle she had going on with herself. He trusted her completely, but he didn't trust Tatian.

Frustrated, he searched all the rooms of the house until he found Faramir who stood in front of a mirror talking to his reflection.

He cleared his throat to keep from laughing. "Uh, am I interrupting?"

Faramir turned abruptly. "What? No, no of course not. How long were you standing there?"

"Long enough to have your egotistical image forever ingrained in my head. Thanks for that."

"What are friends for? I suppose you want to know what I was doing?"

Raithe put his hand up. "Not at all."

"You sure?"

"Definitely." He paused to gather his thoughts. "I'm here to ask a favour of my oldest and dearest friend."

Faramir smirked. "You're three months older than I am, don't forget. That makes you *my* oldest and dearest friend."

Raithe closed his eyes and sighed. Why did he even bother? "Some days, I'd swear the difference is years not months."

"Ouch. Okay, spill. What do you need?"

"I think we should be there today."

"Where?"

He groaned. "Don't be an ass. Where Hartley is. In the square."

"She said she wanted to go alone."

"I know."

"She said she'd be fine."

"I know."

"If she saw us, she'd never forgive us."

Raithe could only stand so many times when Faramir was right. "I agree, so we'll need to make ourselves unrecognisable. It's for her protection. She has her mind set on what she wants to do. The plan she has seen in her mind for a year. Dreamt about each night. It doesn't mean it will happen. This could all blow up in her face."

Faramir paced several times before he spoke. "But we can't assist. At least, you can't. Your oath, remember?"

"I'm not suggesting we do this *for* her. I wouldn't dare ruin her big moment. We'll merely watch from a distance and be sure she doesn't get hurt. I don't trust Tatian. He's rife with evil, and I don't want to see all her efforts spoiled. He'll be armed, where she won't be."

Faramir rubbed his chin. "I hadn't thought of it that way. Okay, I'm in. She's our queen, and we must keep her safe."

Raithe breathed a sigh of relief. "How should we go? As human or animal?"

"Animal. Less likely to be seen. Besides, I'm far too handsome to not be recognised."

"Give me a break."

Faramir grinned. "It's true."

"Whatever. How should we disguise ourselves? Fox? Bird? Preference?"

"Birds. Easier to escape that way."

"I agree. Can't do ravens, or we'll give ourselves away."

"I say pigeons. Less likely to draw attention."

Raithe grimaced. "Not my first choice, but it'll do. I'll grab the spell book. You sure you can stay away from the ladies long enough to do this?"

"While all women entice me, none is as important to me as Hartley."

He slapped his friend on the arm. "Good man. I'll get things started."

Raithe grabbed his book of spells and thumbed through the pages until he found one to shape-shift them into pigeons. He'd promised to keep Hartley safe, and he wouldn't let her down.

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Chapter Four

Trumpets sounded, and the crowd went silent. Hartley watched Tatian emerge from behind a velvet curtain. Dressed in causal attire, he paraded around more like a court jester than one born of noble blood. While she assumed his ridiculous manner was meant to entertain, she found it a sign of weakness. This knowledge empowered her to continue on.

"Welcome one and all, my good people. You're in for a royal treat today," he announced with a voice full of authority.

Cheers and whistles rang out among the people while children waved colourful flags. Tatian held up his arm to silence them and motioned for the warriors to approach.

"Ten men willingly accepted my challenge, yet I see only nine dared to show their face. Will anyone among you take the coward's place?"

Hartley raised her hand and stepped forward, the hem of her robe billowing in the slight breeze. "I will, your majesty." She kept her hood forward to conceal her eyes.

Tatian passed a quick glance over her then roared with laughter. "A woman? That would hardly be a fair fight."

"I can understand if the thought frightens you, sir," she replied with a bow.

Again he laughed though half-heartedly. "This challenge is not for theatrics, dear woman. Blood will be shed. If, and *only* if you are serious, then be warned. I'll not be lenient."

With all the courage she could muster, Hartley answered, "Nor will I."

The crowd erupted into applause, which in turn only deepened Tatian's scowl.

"Very well," he retorted. "I shall accept your offer on one condition. You will battle me only after I've beaten the other nine warriors. I want you to witness the extent of my brutality, as it will no doubt cause you to turn and flee."

She knew all too well of his brutality, however nothing would make her run. Not this day. "As you wish, your majesty."

Tatian returned a smug look then ushered the first of the nine men forward to begin battle.

The lightning clash of swords and the resounding cries of defeat echoed around her ears. Hartley pretended to watch from beneath the hood of her robe, but she hadn't come to witness bloodshed. She knew what the king feared most, and soon the people would too.

* * * *

When Tatian watched the woman approach from the crowd, an odd sensation racked his body. A slow burn that lit his insides on fire. He didn't know whether to be sick or not. It reminded him of the black cloud feeling from earlier, and it still didn't make sense. Her voice had a familiar ring to it, but again, he thought it his imagination. There was no reason to think it could be that whore, Hartley. He'd done away with her. Had personally buried her far away from the grounds so as to not be spooked by her spirit.

It hadn't been his first choice to kill her. He missed her voluptuous body, the wildness of her. The sensuous way she

moved and writhed beneath him. While her beauty put other women to shame, he wanted a harem not a wife. He wanted women who would put out for him willingly, at any given notice, without the promise of marriage, as she had wanted. In his opinion, fidelity sounded like as much fun as being tortured. The women he purchased and brought in from other countries were more than satisfactory, and it wasn't long before he'd forgotten about Hartley. They pleased him when needed. Sucked his cock when ordered. The kingdom didn't need a queen. And he didn't need someone who would try to take his power from him. He wouldn't share his reign with anyone. They would only deflect from him.

Aside from that, she'd gotten too comfortable in his palace. He hadn't liked to see his men staring after her or watching the way she sashayed her hips up the staircase. And she'd meddled in his affairs one time too many. Questioned his tactics in dealing with the townspeople and their so-called troubles.

Now, he had another woman to contend with, though he didn't expect her to stick around for long. He didn't relish the thought of slaying her, either. Tatian worried how it would look to the people. Would they sympathise with her and turn on him?

His sword clanged heavy against his competitors. Their blood soaked his blade and flooded the stage. They dared to call themselves warriors? What a joke. Not a single challenger among them.

As he fought, Tatian stole brief glances towards the mysterious woman. Why wouldn't she leave?

* * * *

It was near twilight when Tatian turned his attention back to her, sweat heavy on his brow and spatters of blood dotted his clothing. The ninth warrior lay crumpled at his feet with a sword protruding from his back.

Hartley gripped the copper pot tight beneath her cloak to remind her she held the key to his undoing.

Tatian scowled and pointed a finger in her direction. "You've seen what I'm capable of, yet you remain. Am I to gather you still wish to fight me?"

She stared into his cold dark eyes. Anger coursed through her veins. Finally, she would once again be face to face with him.

Voice strong and steady, she replied, "Yes, I am, your majesty."

For a moment, she swore his confidence faltered. "Then please, make your way up onto the stage."

Her heart pounded as two armour-clad guards led her up the steps. She walked towards him and watched the same guards remove the dead warrior.

"What weapon will you use?" Tatian scoffed. "A sword perhaps?"

Hartley shook her head. "No, your majesty. I don't require a weapon."

Bemusement crossed his face.

"Am I to believe you would fight me with your bare hands?"

She held one up and turned it side to side. "No, your majesty. They are small and meek."

Throughout the square, people stirred and murmured to one another.

A sneer crossed Tatian's lips, and his thick brows drew into black slants.

"Than what, if anything, do you plan to best me with?"

Hartley pulled out the small potted tree from beneath her robe and held it out. "With this."

* * * *

Raithe perched on a long branch of a nearby tree with Faramir beside him. His breath hitched as he looked on. Even in pigeon form he could sense the rush of adrenaline through her body. She'd made it this far. There would be no stopping her now.

"Look at her," he quipped, pride coursing through his veins. "She doesn't shake or shrink away. I've never felt her this strong before. She's in her element."

"You see, I told you she'd be fine," Faramir gloated. "One day, you'll listen to me and save yourself a lot of grief."

Raithe wasn't convinced that day would ever come. Concern for Hartley came second nature to him. "It's not over yet, friend. We need to be ready should he raise his sword."

"Do you think he would in front of his own people?"

He hated not being certain. "Tatian's capable of anything. Don't forget, he's high on adrenaline, too. Do you really believe that, after killing nine infamous warriors, he'd balk at

killing a woman? Right now he doesn't even know who she is."

"Does she plan to reveal herself?"

Raithe searched her thoughts but couldn't read into them.

"I don't know. This is her moment in the spotlight. Just be ready."

* * * *

After several moments of silence, Tatian clutched his chest as if in fear, only to erupt into laughter. "A small tree? How could you think that a tree would fair well against any of my weapons?"

Hartley grew tired of his theatrics. He was on his way to finding out just how deadly this weapon truly was. "This is no ordinary tree," she countered. "It's a blood tree."

Tatian harnessed his sword and crossed his arms. An arrogant smile smeared his face. "I've never heard of a blood tree."

Hartley waited for the astonished gasps of the crowd to fade before she continued.

"I assure you it's a rare but special tree. By morning, the bud will open into a beautiful red flower. The very flower that Lady Hartley loved most."

Tatian's smile faded, and his face turned ashen.

Satisfied by his reaction, she went on. "The fragrance is unique but very sweet and will remind you daily of her. In fact, you'll not be able to think of anything else except her."

Anger marred Tatian's face, and he waved his hand. "Take this out of my view. I want nothing to do with it. You mock my challenge, and I won't have it."

"Hear me out, your majesty," she insisted, "I don't believe your people know the full story of Lady Hartley. Or how she died by your hands."

Cries of the crowd reverberated all around.

Tatian's lips trembled. "I've no knowledge about this woman you speak of. Leave now from my sight, or I'll have my guards remove you."

Her pulse thundered, but she persisted. "Ah, but your majesty, you *do* know of this woman. Why else would your eyes show fear at the mention of her name?"

"Nonsense," he spat and looked out to the people. "This woman has come to make a joke out of my challenge. She feeds you lies."

Hartley took a step forward. "No, your majesty. It's *your* lies from which this seed was born. You were to marry her until she found out you were stealing from your people and questioned it."

"Enough," he shouted, his face flushed and slick with sweat. He gestured to his guards. "Take this wretched tree from the woman and have it burned at once."

To her delight the guards remained still, their eyes transfixed on the object that disturbed their king so greatly.

Hartley shook her head. "It makes no matter if this tree is burned. I've planted seeds all along the perimeter of the castle while you slept. The seeds sprout fast, and the roots bind tight to the earth. The trees will grow until they surround

the entire castle. Everywhere you look you will see the red blooms and smell their sweet scent. It will be as if Lady Hartley is present herself. Ruling beside you as was intended before you took her life."

"Impossible," he whispered.

Again she held out the tree. "I assure you, it's not."

Tatian fell to his knees. "Please, I beg you. Remove the seeds from around the castle at once."

She raised her chin. "I cannot. The only men strong enough to remove the roots have died by your hands on this very day."

His gaze shifted briefly to the slain challengers then returned to her. "Why," he cried. "Why are you doing this?"

"In honour of Lady Hartley. She loved you despite the cruelty you showed her. Each bloom represents the lies you told and the drops of innocent blood spilled by your hands."

Tatian's lips quivered. "If I claim you the winner of this challenge, will that appease you?"

She chuckled. It didn't surprise her to hear such a selfish request from his lips. "No, it wouldn't."

To the surprise of all, he reached out and grasped her hand. "Please, I beg you. There must be something I can do."

She withdrew her hand and spoke loud enough for the people to hear. "Yes, there is. Admit you killed Lady Hartley with your bare hands. Tell them you're nothing more than a coward. Then relinquish your crown."

Fear swept through him and took his breath hostage. Tatian weighed his options. He rested his hand on the hilt of his sword. One clean strike and he'd be done with this

wretched woman who dared to threaten him in front of his people.

He fought to regain control. "I'll do no such thing. Who are you? Who are you to accuse me of murder?"

The woman raised her hood long enough for him to see her eyes. His chest tightened. He recognised those eyes. They were the same beautiful brown eyes he'd stared into while she moaned in ecstasy. The same eyes that glazed over with her mouth around his cock. Tatian shook his head. This was madness, pure madness. It couldn't be Hartley. He'd killed her and buried her with his own two hands. Watched the dirt coat her pale face and body.

"You aren't her. I demand you tell me. Who are you?"

Her lips spread into a wicked grin. "You know who I am."

"You can't be. You're nothing more than some illusion whipped up by witchcraft. Did someone put you up to this?"

"I promise that I'm the same woman you believed you murdered in your bedchamber and buried alive. The same woman who loved you with all her heart. The only difference now is that I loathe you with every ounce of my being."

Tatian stared at her. His mind couldn't grasp it. He felt himself losing his edge. He'd go crazy if she were to haunt him every night. How could he sleep? How would he eat?

Hearing the murmurs of the crowd, he turned to address them. If they believed him, it wouldn't matter what she said or did. They would prove their loyalty to him.

"This woman before you is a ghost. She isn't real. This is all a game."

To his dismay, the crowd broke out into laughter. Again he turned to his guards. "Do as I say and throw this woman into the dungeon."

Hartley faced the guards and raised her hood to them. "Many of you took care of me when I lived in the castle. I trusted you with my life. The man you protect and guard with your lives decided I was in the way. I don't know what story he told you, but I never left willingly. I hope you'll do the right thing." She concealed her eyes again and turned to the crowd. "This beautiful land that so many of you work and tend deserves an honourable man to rule it. One who cares about your needs and those of your loved ones. This coward before you does not care for anyone but himself. I give you my word."

Tatian reached out and gripped her arm. She noted the rage in his eyes. She'd seen it before. Panic swept through her. He pulled his sword and raised it high in the air. Moonlight illuminated the blood-encrusted blade. Hartley struggled to free herself when two pigeons flew between them. Tatian's cries filled the air as the birds pecked at his face. He released his grip, and his sword fell to the stage floor. Several guards ran out and claimed it.

"You whore," he seethed. "I wish you'd died the first time. I don't know how you survived, but I shouldn't have let up until I heard your neck bones crack."

The crowd booed and spat their disgust.

"You always did have a way with words," Hartley said and moved back. She watched the guards surround him.

"We'll see to it he is tried by the people," one guard announced. "It's good to see you alive and well."

With a final nod she left the stage. Her work was done.

The townspeople expressed their gratitude and cleared a path for her to walk. She started across the bridge when a man on a horse trotted up beside her.

"Might I have a word with you?"

Hartley looked up and recognised the dark-haired man at once, the tenth warrior who'd accepted Tatian's challenge. She'd sent him a letter requesting he arrive late, with the promise of a great reward—Tatian's crown and kingdom.

Pleased by his appearance, she paused and smiled. "I can spare a moment."

The man climbed down from his horse and removed his hat. "I witnessed what took place on the stage a moment ago and find myself curious. Will the blood tree do as you say?"

She glanced to the pebbled ground, heat filling her cheeks. "I'm afraid it's simply a tree that grows red flowers."

"What about the ones you claimed to plant along the castle walls," he prompted.

Hartley met his gaze. "They don't exist."

A smile formed along his lips. "Then you tricked King Tatian."

"I merely exposed him for the murderer he is."

He cocked a brow. "Who *are* you? Some sort of sorceress?"

She sighed. "You're welcome to believe what you wish. I came here today for justice that was long overdue. Now, if you don't mind, I must go." Hartley started to turn and stopped. The final step in her healing would be to change the

tree into a gesture of kindness. "Here." She whispered a few words and handed him the copper pot. "May it bring you good fortune in your coming years as the new king."

Puzzlement streaked the man's chiselled features, but she didn't have time to explain. It would all work itself out in the end.

She turned and made her way back home. The only place she wanted to be was in the arms of her two, handsome lovers.

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Chapter Five

It was dark by the time she returned home. The moonlight had shone brightly along the path and helped guide her home. Hartley opened the door and found herself greeted by a smattering of pink rose petals. They trailed through the foyer and down the hall. She followed the petals to the bedroom where Raithe and Faramir waited unclothed. Candlelight soaked the room in a gentle glow.

"I see you've kept busy while I was out."

Raithe embraced her first. "We figured you could use some pampering." He pulled back briefly to look her over then held her even tighter. "You look like a new woman."

She breathed in his manly scent. "I *feel* like a new woman. A weight from my shoulders has been lifted."

"Good to hear," he added and took a step back.

"I wish you could've seen the way I handled myself. You would have been so proud."

"We *are* proud, love," Faramir said and took her into his arms. "We knew all along you could do it."

"I had my doubts, but you helped me overcome those fears. I couldn't have done it without you."

Hartley looked to the bed and saw the petals strewn along the mattress. She untied her cloak and let it fall to the floor. "I guess I'll be going to sleep now. It has been a very long day."

"You want to sleep?" Raithe looked down at his cock then back to her face. "The night is still young."

She bit her lip to keep from laughing. "What else is there to do?"

Faramir swatted her bottom and pushed his erection against her thigh. "Beautiful temptress. I can think of plenty to do."

He gathered her in his arms and tossed her gently to the middle of the bed. At once, both men moved beside her and made quick work of her dress and undergarments.

Raithe leaned over and delivered a hungry kiss. He suckled her lower lip then did a full sweep of her mouth with his tongue. The heat of his breath shot down her throat and melted her insides. His lips trailed down her neck to her nipple and gave it a long slow suckle while Faramir possessed her mouth. His lips tasted salty, and his breath smelled fresh. Her pulse thundered in her ears. She was in paradise.

When he released his mouth, she scooted down between the handsome beasts and stroked their cocks, their flesh moist and thick in her hands.

"You like that?"

They groaned in unison.

"I know what you'll like even better."

She wrapped her fist tight around Faramir's cock as she lolled her tongue around the head of Raithe's. With his balls cupped, she took him in deep several times then did the same to Faramir. Back and forth, she took turns sucking one cock then the other, revelling in their unique tastes and textures. They watched her intently, their eyes glazed and jaws slacked.

Raithe inched out of her reach and moved between her thighs.

"My turn to taste you." His mouth closed over her pussy and spread her open with his tongue. She moaned in pleasure and tilted back her head.

"Come on, big boy," she taunted to Faramir. "Fuck my mouth."

His cock dangled just above her lips. "Anything you say, love."

He entered her mouth and pumped slow.

"Damn, that feels so good," he hissed.

Hartley grabbed his hips and brought him closer until her lips hit his balls. With practise she'd learned how to deep throat them without gagging—a skill she was rather proud of. Down below, her thighs shook as Raithe devoured her pussy. She moaned with a mouthful of cock.

Raithe paused and dragged his finger around her slit, using her juices to lubricate her. "You're unbelievably soaked, woman. Your scent is driving me wild."

Faramir slid his cock from her mouth and lay back on the bed. "I have just the place for that soaked pussy."

She straddled him and eased her slit over his cock until he'd completely filled her.

"Oh yes," she moaned.

"That's right, love," he prompted. "Ride me hard. Drench my cock."

His fingers traced the outline of her breasts and teased her nipples.

"Mm," she moaned. "Yes."

To her delight, Raithe rubbed cool liquid along her puckered hole and spread her cheeks. His pinky slipped in a few times until she started to squirm.

"Ready for me?"

"Uh huh," she whimpered. The wait almost killed her.

Faramir slowed his thrusts long enough for Raithe's cock to breach her anus. He entered, hard and fast. She cried out at the gratifying pain. Screams of *more* erupted from her as both men fucked her at once. In, out, in, out in smooth steady thrusts. Slow then fast. The double penetration sent mindless pleasure rocketing through her. Every orifice sated. Nerve-endings on fire. Body tingling. She loved the way Raithe pushed down into her while Faramir pushed up into her, and she was trapped in ecstasy, the tantalising pace of their cocks thrusting away.

Hartley stole a look behind her. Raithe's jaw was clenched, his forearms streaked with muscle as he held her. She watched how he fucked her ass, a lust-filled smile fastened to his tightly pressed lips. Taking possession of her body repeatedly.

The melodious sounds of their baritone grunts spurred her on. She loved the way they satisfied her, in body, mind and spirit. The pull of an orgasm spiralled low in her belly. A smile curved her mouth. It would be one hell of a climax.

She clutched Faramir's shoulders. "Yes, I'm going to come now."

Raithe pumped her ass harder and reached around to jiggle her clit until the most incredible orgasm barrelled through her.

"Now," she cried and rode wave after wave of pure delirium.

She was barely aware of how much time passed while she stayed in that spectral place. They thrust and groaned, released their heat inside her and thrust some more. Raithe withdrew first and kissed the small of her back.

"You okay?"

Half-paralysed, half-dazed, she rolled off Faramir and sank into the soft mattress. Her pulse pounded loud and her lungs ached from such deep breaths, but her entire body felt alive. "I've never been better."

"Music to my ears," Raithe murmured.

They stretched out on their sides and nuzzled up close, their warm breath a welcome treat against her moist skin. She chuckled to herself to see little pink petals stuck to each of their bodies.

"Good night, love," Faramir whispered. "Sleep well."

She blinked. He had to be kidding. "Sleep? But I'm wide awake now. What happened to the night is young?"

Raithe mumbled, "Ah, but we aren't," and then began to softly snore.

In a matter of minutes, Faramir also started to snore.

A smile tugged her lips. *Men.*

With their slick bodies to keep her cosy, Hartley watched shadows from the candlelight dance across the walls. She felt strong, balanced and loved. Healed from the inside out. Life had its challenges, but it had its many rewards, too. She especially liked the rewards that came with hard muscles and skilful hands. Everything she needed was within reach.

To her relief, her eyelids grew heavy. The excitement of the day finally left, and a gentle relaxation overtook her. She let out a deep sigh of contentment. No one could ever hurt her again.

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About the Author

Ann Cory is an accomplished author and writes urban fantasy, paranormal, shape-shifters, vampires, fantasy, alternative, and BDSM, along with historical and contemporary to mix it up a bit.

When she isn't concocting a magical seduction story, she writes poetry, reads, and spends time with her husband and son playing games and watching movies. She also enjoys interior decorating, cooking and making wine.

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Ann loves to hear from readers. You can find her contact information, website and author biography at *www.total-e-bound.com*

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