



# HEART OF THE BLOODSTONE

MELINDA BARRON

Loose Id

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*Melinda Barron*



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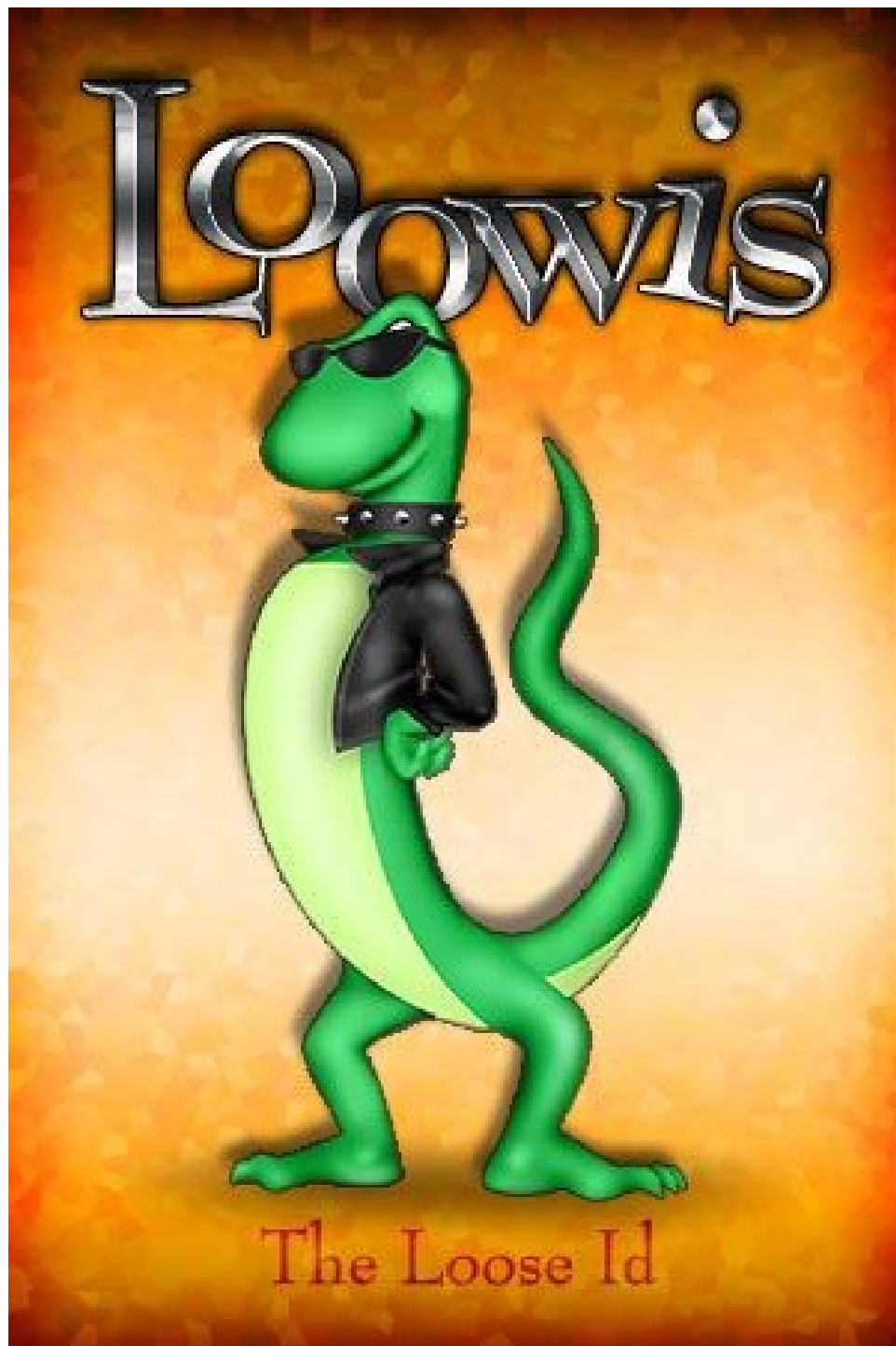
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## Chapter One

Leaves crunched under Regina's paws as she raced through the forest. The crisp autumn air rushed into her lungs, and she pushed it back out in great gasps, savoring the burn as it left her nostrils and mouth. She could spend all afternoon here, enjoying the trees, building up a sweat.

Being in her tiger form and racing among the foliage was pure bliss. Being away from the castle and Matlyn gave her a sense of freedom she hadn't felt in years. The last few locations where they'd resided hadn't provided a place for Regina to romp like the Black Forest of Germany did. She'd almost forgotten how wonderful it was to shift and play, to allow her animal self to reign.

In the back of her mind, though, was the knowledge that if Matlyn succeeded in her plan to free Garmund Monk, the entire world would turn to darkness. If that happened, Regina hoped she didn't survive; she couldn't bear being forced to continue her servitude to Matlyn.

The only good thing to come out of working with the enemy was Jessup, the dark faerie who had captured her heart. She hadn't seen him coming when she'd taken her undercover job. But she'd certainly enjoyed the benefits of his attentions.

At first it had been about the sex; he liked it rough, liked to dominate, and Regina loved the bad boy who knew how to make her senses soar like fireworks shot off on a summer night. He fucked her as if there were no tomorrow, and she loved every minute of it, even if she had, at first, done it under the watchful gaze of Matlyn.

Somewhere along the line, though, sex with Jessup had turned into lovemaking, still done roughly but with feeling now. She felt it with each thrust.

The change had come quickly, and though it had taken him longer to feel it, he had come around. She knew she should have fought her feelings for Jessup, because of his dark nature and his past, but the truth of the statement of not being able to control whom you love had proved true.

She thought about his reaction to the first time they'd felt a connection. They'd come at the same time, the energy pulsing between them. Afterward he'd cornered her, put his hand on her throat, and then pressed her into the wall as Matlyn slept nearby after a particularly harsh and wonderful bout of sex.

*“Do not try your sorcery on me,”* he'd growled in her ear. *“Keep my cock happy, and I'll keep your secret. Try to force your way into my heart again, and I'll tell her exactly what you are, then gladly watch as she cuts your heart out.”*

She'd been shocked that he knew she was a plant in Matlyn's camp. The fact that he'd kept silent let her know he cared about more than his cock.

Regina closed her eyes and inhaled; the alluring scent of pines and firs wafted toward her, the aroma of a few owls, the fresh scent of water and...a human. No, not a human. A witch, a man, someone who had great power attached to him. It had to be an elder. She took another good whiff, then turned toward the smell of the water.

She moved slowly, trying to wrap her mind around what she would say. The first thing she wanted to do was scream at the elder, ask him why they'd ignored her for so long. Hadn't she given them everything they'd ever asked for? She didn't deserve to be treated like a schoolchild who had broken the rules.

When she reached the trees that bordered the water, she stopped to get her bearings. Based on the distance she'd traveled, she would say this was Lake Mummelsee. She glanced around. A man knelt near the water, his hand outstretched. Rising from the water were two nixies. They were laughing, their long hair draped over their naked breasts.

When the nixies saw her, they gasped and dived under the surface. The man rose and turned to her, and Regina stiffened.

The man was a witch, yes, but she didn't recognize him. He stood still and watched her, then slowly pointed to a rock near where she stood. There was a robe there. She padded over and concentrated on her human form. In her mind her brilliant white fur disappeared. Her bones creaked as they shrank, and her paws turned into hands and feet. Her hair trailed over her shoulders, and yet she shivered before she wrapped herself in the voluminous material.

The witch continued to watch her, and she waited for him to make the first move. When he didn't, she opened her mouth. He held up his hand for silence, waved his fingers, and a doorway appeared. He disappeared inside it before she could say a word.

Should she follow him? What if the elders hadn't send him? What if this was some sort of trap set by Matlyn? As distressing as that idea was, it couldn't be; Matlyn didn't know Regina was working both sides.

"Nothing ventured, nothing gained," she said, her words seeming to echo among the trees. She took a step toward the doorway. Power emanated from the other side, and it made her hands shake as she reached out and touched the wall.

She stepped over the threshold, and the doorway behind her disappeared. *Keep going; keep going.* One, two, three more steps, and she came to a circular room, its walls covered in various rocks; it had to be a cave, the cave where Monk was held.

His inert form lay in the center, surges of power coming from the pentagram. The man stood near Monk's head. He had his arms crossed in front of his chest, his gaze fixed on her. She took a step forward, and the room seemed to spin.

The stones guarding the points of the pentagram lifted up and spun, then started to play a game of musical chairs, jumping from point to point to point.

Regina watched them, her eyes widening as she tried to decipher their meaning. She gasped when a man appeared at the edge of the pentagram. He had no distinguishing features, no face, no hair, no anything. He caught one of the stones, hefted it in his hand, and threw it toward her. Before the stone reached her,

though, a second man appeared, diving in front of her to catch the stone. He rolled when he landed, faceup.

Fear controlled her, and she took a step backward. This apparition was faceless too. He tossed a stone, a green stone with red veins running through it, from one hand to the other.

The bloodstone. He had the bloodstone.

"What are you trying to tell me?" She turned toward the witch who stood silently near the pentagram. "I need more than this. All I see is two men. Who are they? Who is the woman? Why am I not seeing a woman?"

"No more."

"What do you mean no more?" She took a step toward the pentagram, and the man near her feet reached out and grabbed her ankle. She pulled away from him, kicking out as she did.

"All gone," the witch said, and she turned back to him.

"What's all gone? Do you mean we've failed, or...what?"

"All gone." He faded as he said the words.

Regina screamed out in frustration. "No! I need more. Help me!"

"No more help." The men started to play catch again, tossing the bloodstone from one point of the pentagram to another. The stone broke into two pieces, then three, then four. The men were juggling it now, the pieces flying through the air.

The juggling shifted back into throwing, their aim turning deadly as pieces of bloodstone pelted the men's faces and bodies, leaving behind blood and bruises. A red cloud of anger appeared around them and then suddenly disappeared.

They each pocketed a bloodstone, and then one more appeared. They pocketed those, and the same happened over and over until their clothing bulged with bloodstone.

"What the hell? Tell me what that means!" Regina held her hands up in supplication, but she received no answer. She hadn't really expected to, but it had



been worth a shot. The men continued to play with the stones for another few minutes, and then they faded and the room dissolved.

Regina found herself back in the forest. The smell of the river and the sound of owls replaced the cold of the cave. She felt as if she'd been dumped into the frigid river. Her body shook, and she tried to catch her breath.

"Are you trying to tell me I have to figure out the rest on my own? How will I know who the final triad is?" She yelled the words out, not surprised when she didn't receive an answer. The elder had shown her two men but no woman. Could the triad for the bloodstone be a duo? Was that all that was needed to capture the stone?

It couldn't be, though. Each stone had a triad, three people who would bond and protect the magical gem from being used for evil. But why had there been no woman? And why were the men faceless?

"Damn it!" She cried out again and ran toward where she'd first seen the elder. "Get back here! Tell me what I need to know!"

Always before she'd had guidance, and now, when it mattered the most, she was left with nothing? If Matlyn managed to free Monk from his pentagram on Samhain, then all hell would break loose.

"Please." Maybe if she held her anger in check, they would answer her plea. When nothing happened, she sat down in the grass and cried, great sobs making her chest heave. When anger replaced the sorrow, she wiped the tears from her face and turned her gaze toward the sky.

"Assholes! I've given you everything! Help me." She really didn't expect an answer, but asking for one made her feel better. But it didn't solve her problem. What the hell was she supposed to do now? Always before the elders had led her; they'd given her information, and she'd done exactly as they'd said. It had helped the amethyst triad come together and recover the stone, and she and Jessup had hand-delivered the garnet to its triad.

But now, when time was running short and Matlyn still had her grubby paws on the bloodstone, she was alone.

No, she corrected herself, not alone; she had Jessup. Together they would find a solution. Before Samhain she'd make sure Matlyn didn't have control of the bloodstone, even if she had to take it from her dead hand.

## Chapter Two

Jessup swept his gaze over the expanse of trees that abutted the clearing surrounding the castle. Regina was on her way back, and she wasn't happy. He could feel her anger in his pores, grabbing hold of his body, seeping into his bones.

What the hell had those assholes done to her this time? They took advantage of her, using her anger and disgust with all things evil to make her dance on a string and do exactly as they wanted. He loved her loyalty to them, her absolute refusal to betray the elders and all they stood for.

To his way of thinking, there was one way out of the situation. Kill Matlyn and her acolytes, then take the bloodstone and use it to destroy Monk. The evil would be gone, and the situation would be handled.

Then he would have nothing more to do during his lifetime but sip wine, eat good food, and fuck Regina every day, three or four times a day and as many times at night if given the opportunity. He thought about her lying under him, her face bright with pleasure as he thrust in and out of her tight pussy; he imagined the sweet timbre of her voice as she pleaded for a whipping, beseeched him to allow her to suck him deep into her throat.

His cock hardened and he rubbed the outline, remembering last night and the way she'd toyed with him, flicking her tongue over his cock and balls before presenting him her ass. Thinking of fucking that dark opening made him want the day to speed by, so they could retire and be alone together and he could do it again.

"Is that cock for me?" Matlyn's voice purred in his ear, and she traced her fingers over his length. His cock didn't jump at her touch. If anything it seemed to wither.

He pushed her hand away and sneered at her. "Not anymore." He looked into her eyes, and for a minute he thought she might throw a spell at him to try to bind him and then ride him, as if that would work. His faerie powers were much stronger than her witch ones, although when he'd first come to her court he'd allowed her to think she could control him.

His plan had been to let her use him, then throw her over after she'd achieved her goal. He would kill Matlyn and Monk, and the faeries would take over. But then he'd met Regina, sweet, submissive Regina. His cock throbbed again.

"I could make you fuck me."

"You could try."

He watched her flounce away before she flung herself into a chair and spread her legs wide. She snapped her fingers and yelled out, "Slave!"

A young woman appeared out of nowhere, cowering as she bobbed her head.

"Eat me." The woman hurried across the floor, then dropped to her knees. Jessup sneered as Matlyn groaned.

"See what you've forced me into? You've taken my darling Regina from me. I can feel Regina's disgust now when she pleasures me, and although forcing her to do it gives me delight, I tire of having to tell her every little movement she needs to make."

As if to prove her point, Matlyn yanked on the slave's hair. The woman yelped in pain as her mistress jerked her head back. "Harder, you idiot."

The witch's whimpers mixed with Matlyn's mewls of laughter, and Jessup focused on the trees. A slight movement caught his gaze. Regina padded out of the forest, her brilliant white fur glistening with sweat. She dropped to her side, then rolled to her back, and wiggled her hips back and forth in the grass. A smile lit his lips as he watched her. She was so beautiful, no matter what form she took.

He wanted to be down there with her, to watch her wipe the water from her body and then change into human form. She would smile for him, laugh, and hold

out her arms, and he would take her, right then and there, reminding her that, while her loyalties in this situation were with the elders, she belonged to him.

“That's it. Much better.” Matlyn's words of praise brought him back to the room. “Oh, right there, yes.” Her groans increased, and seconds later she screamed out, stroking the woman's hair, praising her for her obedience.

“Come to my bed tonight.”

“Thank you, mistress.”

“You're welcome, little slave. Now, go and find a few men to join us. I want cock tonight, and I'll let you choose a few choice specimens, but make sure you make wise decisions.”

The woman scurried from the room, and Jessup kept his gaze focused on Regina. “Is sex all you think about?”

“No, of course not. I think about the way the elders will cower at my feet in a few weeks. And I think about how everyone will rush to do my bidding, including you.”

He didn't answer her, and when the outside wall suddenly disappeared, he mentally kicked himself for not focusing his gaze on Matlyn.

“How sweet. The prodigal tiger returns. But she's left you alone all day long. What has she been doing?”

“Stretching her legs.”

“All four of them?” Matlyn snapped her fingers, and Regina appeared between them, still rolling around on her back. She stopped suddenly, then crouched and lay on her belly, growling.

“I love it when she's fierce like that,” Matlyn said, stroking her thigh. “Change for me, my darling, then come and please me.”

Regina cast a furtive glance at Matlyn, then rose and padded over to Jessup. When she arrived, she rubbed against his thigh. He stroked her between the ears, then laughed softly.

“You've broken our agreement,” Matlyn said, her voice full of rage.

“Did I? I think the arrangement was that Regina would be mine and you would have use of my powers when the time came for you to have need of them.” He bent, grasped the tiger's ears, and rubbed them just the way he knew she liked it.

Her low rumble of pure contentment soaked into his body, making him vibrate with the need to fuck her.

“No, our deal was that you could fuck her but not keep her. Now when I go to look for her at night, I find her in your bed.”

“Yes, you do,” Jessup responded lazily. He leaned over and planted a kiss on Regina's furry forehead, then stood. He continued to stroke her as she laid her head against his thigh. “That is her choice, not yours or mine.”

Matlyn stood and clasped the arms of the chair, lifted it, then slammed it down into the stone floor. It shattered under the force, and Jessup lifted an eyebrow at her.

“Am I supposed to be impressed?” He smirked at her.

“I will expect her in my bed tonight. She can join the orgy, and you can go to hell.”

“I think not.” He narrowed his gaze at her. “You need me, and you know it. She'll come to your bed when I say she will, and it won't be tonight or tomorrow night or the night after that. Perhaps later in the week I'll reconsider, because I know my darling does enjoy being with a woman from time to time, but I will make the decision. Not you.”

For a long, quiet moment he thought she would object. Instead she stood and left the room without saying another word. Jessup's smile grew as he continued to stroke Regina's fur, and when the fur disappeared and her soft hair took its place, he wove his fingers into the strands and massaged her scalp.

“You shouldn't antagonize her,” Regina said. “If she knew about—”

“And you shouldn't talk with your mouth full.” He pulled his cock from his pants and presented it to her. She took it hungrily, sucking him in deeply, then releasing him, scraping her teeth over the sensitive flesh. He relished her need, the desire to lose herself in him, to block out everything else except the two of them.

Damn how he loved this woman. He groaned at the contact before putting both hands on her head, holding her in place as he slowly fucked her mouth, relishing her tongue running up and down his flesh as his cock slid in and out.

“I've missed you today, my tigress.” He fucked her faster, savoring the choking noises she made when the crown hit the back of her throat and she fought to dislodge him. The gurgling noises made him harder, and he clasped her hair tighter. “Spread your legs and put your hands behind your back.”

Her obedience made him quiver with need. They were perfect together, two pieces that fit together as one. She tried to cough, and he pulled back, holding her against his thigh as she sought to catch her breath.

Before she'd recovered, he lifted her on invisible strings, making her hover in front of his mouth. He spread her lips and flicked his tongue over her clit. Her sharp cry of bliss drove him on, and he sucked the hard nub into his mouth, weaving three fingers together and pushing them inside her wetness as he bit her, gently at first and then increasing the pressure. Her whimpers urged him on, and he fucked and sucked her without mercy.

“Jessup, oh yes! More, please, please!”

He abandoned her clit and took a step back from where she floated. “You can do better than that.”

“I need you inside me, please, all the way. Fill me. Make me yours, only yours.”

Her fingers moved toward her clit, and he slapped them away before he sent her soaring higher into the air.

“You'll keep your hands to yourself unless you have my permission. Do you understand?”

“Yes, yes, please, I'm begging you.” The pleading tone of her voice made him pulsate with the need to possess her. She strained against her invisible bonds, and he released her, letting her fall until she was almost to the floor before stopping her suddenly.

The first time he'd done this she'd protested mightily, but he knew the sudden fall that created the sinking feeling that built in her stomach, kept her off guard, and increased her pleasure. His lady loved it hard.

Her cries of alarm followed by nervous laughter made him smile. “Jessup, please.”

“Say it, Regina. You know what I want.” He lifted her again, watching as she floated higher and higher, almost to the ceiling.

“Fuck me, I'm begging you. I belong to you.”

He sent her into free fall again, her scream filling the room as he turned her midflight. Her descent stopped when she was level with his cock. She gasped when he slammed into her. He grasped the back of her neck, then pressed her head down as their flesh slapped together, their grunts mixing.

His balls tingled and grew tighter, and he slipped a hand around her, finding her clit and pinching it hard. She came instantly, her scream reverberating in the room, her pussy walls clamping down on him, the feeling at once a mixture of pain and pleasure that sent him soaring along with her.

He filled her, his cock still hard and pulsing when he was done. As a faerie male he could go all night, but he knew his tiger would need a rest, but that wouldn't come now. He'd take her mouth again, and then her ass; then, after that, perhaps he'd allow her to sleep before he fucked her again.

She was the only woman he'd ever met that he could not get enough of. When he was inside her, he felt complete—something that had never happened to him before.

Jessup traced his lips over her shoulders, then kissed her neck. “You're mine, Regina, all mine.”



“How sweet.” Jessup jerked his head toward the doorway. His eyes narrowed in anger at the dark faerie who stood lounging against the doorjamb. He felt Regina drop under him and cursed himself for not concentrating. He stopped her before she hit the floor, then gently lowered her the rest of the way.

“That looks like so much fun. Can I play too?”

“Notus. What the fuck are you doing here?”

## Chapter Three

“Not fucking, unfortunately. But your lovely friend can help remedy that situation.”

Regina watched the faerie stride into the room. His dark hair was longer than Jessup's, but not by much. He wore black leather pants and a tight black T-shirt, both of which outlined muscular arms and legs and a broad, full chest. Really, the only differences between the two men were their faces. Jessup's face was rounder, his lips fuller. The new faerie's face was angular, with a larger nose and thin lips. She pushed up from the floor, her stomach still churning from being lifted and suddenly dropped before being fucked hard and coming even harder. Jessup always made her fly when he manipulated her that way.

“She's beautiful, Jessup. You don't mind sharing, do you?”

“Yes, I do. With you, anyway.”

Jessup pushed her behind him, and clothes instantly appeared on her body. She'd never heard that ultrapossessive tone in his voice before. It was true that no one dared touch her without permission, even Matlyn, but she'd never heard him sound like this. Who was this man, and what did he mean to her lover?

“You hurt my feelings,” the man replied. “You never used to care. In fact, I can remember a great many times when we shared and had an amazing time doing it.”

“I asked what you were doing here.”

“I was invited, a guest of Matlyn's.” He focused his gaze on Regina, his dark eyes sparkling. “Hello, my dear. I'm Notus. It's a pleasure to meet the one who has captured Jessup's heart. It looked as if you were doing a fine time of capturing his cock, too. You scream like a nasty little slut when you come. I like that.”

Regina flushed, then put her hand on Jessup's shoulder. His muscles were thick with tension and for a moment she thought he would throw a fist at the newcomer.

“Your host is not here, as you can see. Please leave.”

The smile on Notus's face deepened, and he walked around them, moving toward a couch. He paused in front of the remains of a chair. “Someone wasn't very happy. What's wrong, Jessup? Did she not suck you right and you took your frustrations out on the wood? Do I need to give her lessons?”

He put his hand on his crotch and squeezed gently. Regina could see a hard cock that looked as if it could rival Jessup's in length and girth.

“I won't tell you again to leave.”

“But you just did.” Notus plopped down on the couch and put his hand inside his pants. “Perhaps I could jack off while you fuck her again. I did enjoy watching her squirm. It was quite arousing.”

Regina found her gaze pulled to his cock, which he'd now taken out of his pants. He worked himself as if he were doing a performance, his hand going up and down slowly, his gaze focused on her.

She turned to Jessup, only to see him staring at her, his eyes filled with an emotion she couldn't read. Groans and grunts called her attention back to the couch. Notus's hand moved faster now, and within seconds he groaned loudly and cum shot into the air.

His hips jerked as he continued to squeeze, and when he finally stilled, he exhaled loudly. “Well, I needed that. It's been a long trip, and watching the two of you made me hard as a thousand rocks.”

“Explain yourself.”

“I told you, I was invited.” Notus cleaned himself with a towel that appeared in his hands. When it disappeared he crossed one leg over his knee, then stretched his

arms across the back of the couch. He left his cock out; it was hard, and she knew he'd done it for her, trying to entice her to come and play with him.

"Put that thing away."

For the first time since Notus had arrived, Regina smiled, but she slid her lips together to keep it hidden as she watched Jessup, whose gaze was shooting daggers at the newcomer.

"Thing? This thing has a name, and it's much more glorious than your own. Are you jealous?"

"Of that? Hardly." This time Jessup sneered. "But I don't want you corrupting my woman."

"Afraid she'll see what a real cock looks like? That she'll want a taste of how a man really fucks?"

"You named your cock?" Regina stared at Notus, surprise shooting through her. "I've heard of that, but I've never known a man vain enough to actually do it."

Notus's laugh filled the room. "Really? Ask your boy here about naming cocks. Or don't you know him that well yet?"

Naming cocks? Jessup had never said anything to her about calling his dick by any name. It seemed a strange thing for him never to have mentioned during the time they'd been together. Regina opened her mouth to ask but quickly closed it when Jessup held up a finger. "We're not talking about my cock. You, Notus, never answered my question about why you were asked here."

"It seems that you and your *penis* weren't getting the job done. Matlyn decided she wanted a real dark faerie to share her bed, so she sent for me, and I'm more than happy to oblige the witch." He stood and stroked himself once before putting his cock back into his pants, then strolled out of the room slowly, winking at Regina as he went by.

"How long have you known him?"

“A few hundred years too long,” Jessup replied. “We used to be running mates, but...things change.”

Regina's mouth went dry as she processed the word *hundred*. As a shape-shifter she would live longer than most of the witches she knew, but she would not live as long as her faerie lover. That thought was daunting, and it made her stomach roil. She tried to push it away, though. That was the future, and they had things to deal with in the here and now.

“We've made a mistake.”

“Why do you say that?” Jessup turned to her, his hands on his hips. “Notus will keep her cunt happy, and that is fine with me.”

“If she's sending for other dark faeries, she's angry with us for not playing with her as much as she would like. Plus I've been less than receptive when we've visited her bed. If we fall out of favor, it will be harder to help the triad retrieve the bloodstone.”

“We'll manage.”

“Will we?” She strode over the couch and plopped down in the spot where Notus had sat. “The elders have abandoned me.”

“What?”

Disbelief mixed with barely repressed anger colored his words. She looked up to where he still stood, then told him the whole story without giving him a chance to interrupt. When she was done the room grew silent, and she wanted for him to rant, to voice his anger and tell her they were leaving Matlyn's lair.

“We don't need their help. We know where the stone is, and if no triad appears, we'll trick the bloodstone as we did the garnet. Once it's in the elders' hands, it will be up to them to complete the spell killing Monk. We will have done our duty.”

The roiling turned into an excited churning, much like the one that happened when he lifted her on high, then dropped her unexpectedly. “We?”

“Yes, we. They may have shown their disloyalty to you, but I won't. And I'll be damned if I let the bitch win.”

“What happens if I can't identify the triad?” The thought had been uppermost in her mind as she'd run back to the castle. Each stone had three people to protect it: a triad to draw on its power. Always before an elder had told her who to expect or what to do. Now that she was on her own, she was more than a little nervous that she'd screw it up and everything she'd done in the past would be for naught.

“If that happens, I'll give you a good, hard spanking. That will refocus your energies and make you see clearer, I'm sure.”

\* \* \*

Notus wove his way through the castle, stopping from time to time to examine the flickers of power he felt coming from various rooms. None of witches were very sharp. As a matter of fact, he was surprised by the lack of talent they possessed.

No wonder Matlyn sought dark faeries. With the people she had here right now, she couldn't kick-start a toaster. He was shocked they'd been able to steal three of the stones, much less hide the two they still had. The only real power he felt came from Jessup and Regina. The room had glowed while he'd fucked her, shards of light spreading from their bodies. It was unlike anything he'd ever seen before.

Matlyn had to have seen it too. That's why she'd sent for him. As long as she didn't ask him to kill Jessup, he'd be fine. Despite his reputation he'd never been one for killing. Hurting someone to gain what he wanted didn't matter to him, but he had no stomach for taking a life.

He didn't expect he would have to do it here. All Matlyn needed was someone to back her up, since Jessup was thinking with his prick rather than his brain these days.

Not that Notus could blame him. The little tiger was delicious, full-bodied, and oh so beautiful when she gave herself over to passion. He hadn't been lying when he

had said watching them fuck had made him rock hard. Getting himself off had helped, but just a little.

He thought of her on all fours while he rode her; she would moan and pant with pleasure just as she had when Jessup fucked her. The image was so strong it overwhelmed him. Maybe that's why he was having trouble sensing power. Maybe they were strong and he was the weak one, thinking only with his cock now.

After all, the shifter had bewitched Jessup, and who was to say that she couldn't try to do the same thing to him? He was going to have to watch himself around her.

That didn't mean he wouldn't fuck her. He'd bend her over in a heartbeat, although he was pretty sure that Jessup would get royally pissed off.

Dipping his wick into a woman was just fine; allowing her to light it was a whole different ball of wax. He'd stick with the wetness and stay away from the fire. That way he was in charge and not the other way around.

"Notus, named for the Greek god in control of the south wind. I've heard you can spread chaos and destruction. Have I been misinformed?"

"It depends on who you're speaking with. Some people say I just bring fun with me." Notus didn't turn to look at the woman who spoke to him. It wasn't hard to figure out who it was, since there would only be two other people here who knew his name, and he'd already visited with them.

"I didn't call you here for merriment."

Now he turned to her, noticing her dark hair and even darker eyes. She was not smiling, and he wondered if she ever did. He continued to watch her, wondering what was going through her mind as she ran her gaze up and down his body.

"What exactly do you want me to do?"

"You've seen her?"

There was no mistaking whom Matlyn referred to. The supernatural community knew how she'd fallen for the shape-shifter and how angry she'd been when Regina and Jessup had bonded.

"She's delicious, is she not?" Matlyn stepped behind him, trailing her fingers up and down his back. "You saw the way she reacted to being fucked? So passionate, so beautiful. Imagine your cock inside her, pumping her. Think about the way she would welcome you, squeeze you, hold you tight as you soared in orgasm."

His cock pulsed as he again imagined the beautiful redhead under him, lifting her hips to his thrusts. Oh yes, he could imagine every second of fucking her.

"You can see why I want her back." She ran her nails down his back, causing a delicious sensation of pain to sweep through him. "You can help me get rid of Jessup."

Tension swept through him, and he clenched a fist. "If you're looking for someone to kill Jessup, you've sought the wrong faerie. I won't kill my old friend just so you can get your pussy eaten without him watching."

He hissed as the witch dug her nails deeper into his skin. Pivoting around to face her, he caught her hand just as she moved to slap him.

"I could kill him myself. What I want is for you to break them up. Get between them. Make her want your dick. When he's angry and gone, then you can leave, after I tap into your power for the Samhain ceremony, of course. When you're both gone, she'll come back to me."

"Maybe she likes cock and won't want to come back to you."

He expected another burst of anger, but it didn't come. Instead she gave him a sweet smile.

"She likes it all. Trust me. I know. I'll make sure she gets dick from time to time, but never again from a dark faerie."

"Yes, we are addictive." He grabbed Matlyn's hair and pulled backward, pointing her face toward the ceiling. He hovered over her, placing his mouth right



over hers without touching. “She must like someone who can go all night and give it to her in any way she wants for hours at a time. She’ll like it even more with two of us fucking her.”

She studied him for a few minutes, her eyes narrowing. “At first. But you need to get inside her mind too. Pull her away from him. Then you can take his place.”

Notus wrinkled his nose. “Will I? You just said you’d never let your precious tiger fuck a dark faerie again. If I stay, I’ll want her.”

“Then I might make an exception, if you please me first.”

He wanted to laugh in her face. Instead he let go of her hair and stepped back. “What’s in it for me?”

She rubbed the back of her neck and glared at him, but he could see her hard nipples poking out from her thin shirt. “Power. If you help me at Samhain, I’ll give you what I promised Jessup—unlimited power in our new order.”

“Your words are pretty, but I don’t trust you.” He could smell her arousal, see how much she wanted to fuck. He was afraid if he put his dick in her, she would suck the life out of him. There was a darkness around her that he’d never seen, even in one of his own kind. “I’ll play with your tiger for a few days while I decide if you’ll follow through or hang me out to dry.”

He pushed past her, smiling as an angry growl escaped her throat. “Don’t worry. I’ll pick out my own room. If you have a message for me, send the tiger and no one else.”

The wide hallway stretched out in front of him, and he walked quickly, taking a left at the end. He wanted a room that faced the outside so he could get fresh air. The castle had a foul smell, and the scent of the trees would help clear it out.

Three doors down he stepped inside. The room was empty, the window small. A snap of his fingers increased the portal, and the crisp air from outside suffused the room. *This one would do nicely.*

The first order of business would be a nice big bed where he would seduce Regina. He held out his palm and blew; dust spread from his fingertips, and the air shimmered. Flames burst to life in the man-size fireplace against one wall. Dark ripples of silk fabric fell from the ceiling, covering the stone walls. Braziers floated down from the ceiling, providing soft light. Large, overstuffed chairs appeared around a gathering of bulky pillows that settled on the floor, and under the window a large bed, covered in black satin bedding, floated for a moment before settling to the ground.

He smirked as he imagined Regina walking into the room, surveying his decorating before her gaze settled on the bed.

“All the better to fuck you on, my sweet.” He might not trust Matlyn, but this could prove to be fun. At Samhain he would decide whether to follow the witch or throw her over and take control of her new world. Maybe he and Jessup should do it together and keep Regina for themselves.

That might be a plan worth exploring.

\* \* \*

Matlyn stepped into her private room and sealed the door behind her. Fucking idiot of a dark faerie thought he had the upper hand with her. He would soon find out that he was just a little cog in the plan.

She stepped up to the three pedestals in the center of the room. One was empty. The amethyst should be there, but her untalented minions had been unable to recover the stone after the triad had stolen it from her. Hopefully the three witches she'd sent after it this time would be more successful.

The garnet flashed at her from its perch. She picked it up and hefted it in her fingers. Then she threw it against the wall, anger flooding her as it shattered into a thousand pieces and lay there before lifting up from the floor and jelling back together. It floated to its stand and settled on the base.

“You little cunt of a tiger.” Hot tears filled her eyes as she thought about her beautiful Regina, of how she'd betrayed her. “Did you not think I would find out the truth?”

She'd been good; Matlyn would give her that. For years she'd thought Regina had loved her, had savored their time together as much as she had. She'd purred for her, stroked her body and soared along with her, screaming out Matlyn's name as she came—doing anything she was asked to do when all along she'd been nothing more than a spy, fucking her one moment, then stealing from her the next. She'd given the garnet to the triad, using the dark faerie to make sure things went as planned.

Now Matlyn was down two stones. She knew the amethyst was in Spain somewhere, but her spies had been unable to locate the garnet.

The witch she'd sent to watch Regina today had reported her meeting with an elder but had failed to capture said elder so she could question him about the stones. She was surrounded by incompetence and deceit. Which meant she had to take matters into her own hands.

She stepped toward the bloodstone and wrapped her fingers around it. Sparks of electricity shot from the green stone infused with red veins and burned her fingers. She let it go and laughed. Yes, this was definitely the real thing, and it didn't like the fact she'd touched it.

Things would be ready on Samhain even if she didn't have all the stones. The bloodstone was the most powerful of them all, and a sacrifice or two would infuse Monk with the power needed to break his bonds.

And she had the perfect candidates—one a dark faerie who thought he knew everything, and the other a lying white tiger she would enjoy watching burn.

There was no way Notus could break them apart. But he would keep them occupied for the next few weeks, giving her time to make sure all was ready for

their deaths—a physical one for Regina and the end of Jessup's soul, leaving way for Monk to inhabit his body.

Samhain couldn't come fast enough for her.

## Chapter Four

Regina ignored the greetings tossed her way as she moved toward Matlyn's room. Jessup was in their room; she'd told him she was going to visit the witch while he slept, and she'd thought he would tell her to make sure she kept her thighs tightly closed.

Instead he'd just nodded. She knew he now agreed with her, that they had maybe taken things too far with Matlyn. She knew he didn't like the appearance of Notus, and neither did she. Matlyn had called him for a reason, and hopefully Regina could find out why this afternoon.

Outside Matlyn's door she dropped her robe to the ground and closed her eyes. Her body tingled as the shifting process began, her blood heating as fur replaced skin. She dropped to all fours, rolling her head from side to side as the process ended. Then she concentrated on the door, and it swung open.

She padded inside, surprised to find Matlyn by herself.

"Darling, how sweet of you to come and visit me."

She held out her hand, and Regina walked to her, purring as the witch stroked her ears. She laid her head against Matlyn's thigh and rubbed softly.

"I've missed you, Regina. I'm so happy to see that you've come without Jessup. Have you missed me too?"

Regina rolled onto her back and then batted the air with her paws to indicate that she wanted to be petted. Hopefully that conveyed the message that yes, she'd missed her, without telling an actual lie the witch might see through.

“Did you enjoy meeting our visitor?” Regina mewed in response, then pushed herself up onto her feet and licked Matlyn's hand. “He is rather delicious, isn't he? A little handsomer than your Jessup, I think.”

She took a few steps away and sat down, swishing her tail against the floor.

“No? Well, perhaps you don't think so, but I do.”

Matlyn walked toward the bed. She crooked her finger at Regina to follow her. She'd hoped it wouldn't come to this. She didn't care that Matlyn was female. One of the reasons she'd been selected for this job was her bisexuality. She enjoyed making love with a woman, feeling her soft skin and heavy breasts, tasting her nipples and clit.

The only time it disgusted her was when it was Matlyn she was touching. Before Jessup she'd been able to forget her disgust, to do what needed to be done, knowing it would all go toward the greater good. But now that she'd tasted true love, forged the bond with her faerie, the thought of going back to Matlyn—twisted, evil Matlyn—sickened her.

Matlyn lay back on the bed, her feet touching the floor. She was propped up on her elbows, eying Regina critically when she didn't move. “No? More's the pity that he's gotten so into your brain that you no longer obey me.”

Regina moved toward her, but Matlyn held up her hand. “Too late. I know you don't want me anymore, and although it's painful, I will move on. It's not as if I can't replace you.”

A stab of fear pierced Regina's heart. It was worse than she'd thought. She should have come to Matlyn alone earlier, and she should have gone right toward her when she asked. If the witch threw her and Jessup out now that Notus was here, what would she do? She wouldn't be able to assist the triad if they appeared, and all would be lost, just because she'd fallen in love.

Should she be punished for losing her heart?

“I do have a task for you, pretty one.” Relief replaced the fear. “Will you entertain our new faerie? I want to keep him happy until Samhain. I will need his

strength, along with Jessup's, to complete the ceremony once we recover the amethyst. Notus has expressed an interest in you, and if you keep him happy, it will be of great assistance to me. Show him around. Have a good time."

Regina shifted, her hands on her hips and her mouth hanging open in shock as the transformation ended. "You want me to play tour guide?"

"I don't care what you do with him. Suck his cock or let him fuck your tight little cunt; I really don't care. I'm sure you'll find being serviced by two dark ones to be quite pleasurable: a cock in your pussy and one in your ass. We'll find one for your mouth too. I'll enjoy watching you get soundly fucked." She licked her lips, and Regina held back a shudder. "And then you can use your tongue on me. Would you like that, sweet tiger?"

"You know I would." She gave Matlyn what she hoped was her best pouty, sexy look, then took a step toward her. She stopped when Matlyn took a step back.

"I didn't say you could do it now. You've let me know you're more into cock right now, and that's what I've given you. When you tire of it, you can serve me again. In the meantime I have a wonderful witch who will visit my bed tonight. She's not quite as talented as you, but she's learning, and she's so eager. I get wet just thinking about her."

Regina crossed the room and put her hand on Matlyn's shoulder before kissing her chin. She captured her lower lip in a gentle kiss, sliding her tongue over the ridge. "I can be eager. Come to bed with me."

She cupped Matlyn's breast, letting her fingers tease the nipple. It hardened under her touch, and she dropped her head as she pushed aside the cloth, preparing to suckle her. When Matlyn stopped her, Regina stiffened.

"I said, not now."

Fear overtook Regina again. Damn her! Regina turned, her gaze sweeping the room. Where were the stones? Had the witch erected some sort of magical barrier to hide them? Or had she taken them someplace totally different? It was something

else she needed to find out, but it would be hard if Matlyn kept pushing her away. The only real plus was that Matlyn still didn't know the garnet was fake.

"Don't throw me away." Regina cringed inwardly at the position she was in, having to beg for Matlyn's affections. She turned back and caressed her nipple again, praying lust would overcome Matlyn's resistance. "Please."

"You heard what I said. Now go. Prove your renewed loyalty to me by doing as I ask. That's the only way you'll taste my pussy again."

"Matlyn, I—"

"Knock, knock." Notus's voice sounded in her ear, and she whirled around to find him standing behind her. He stared into her eyes, making her feel as if she'd been mesmerized, then lowered his gaze to her bare breasts.

"Delicious. If I'd known you were here, I would have come sooner. Literally."

"You've already done that. Are you sure you can manage it again so quickly?" Jessup was behind her now, the boom of his voice making her jump. Her robe had been wrapped around her body, and his hand possessively cupped her hip.

"I know I can, but it's been a hundred years or more since I've seen you do it, my dear friend. You always were a little slow on the uptake, and I'm sure it hasn't improved with age."

Jessup's voice was cool and even. "I'm like a fine wine."

"Really? Does that mean you sleep in an oak casket and need to be brought out to breathe before you're at your top potential?"

Matlyn's laugh caught their attention. "You two boys play nice now, or I'll have too much fun watching and won't be able to concentrate on the important things. Maybe afterward I can watch the two of you"—she paused as if searching for the right words—"fight it out to see who gets to be on top."

The witch disappeared, and Regina felt as if her stomach had lodged in her throat.



“What problems have you brought on now, Notus?” There was annoyance in Jessup's voice.

“Why, you're my tour guide. Haven't you heard, Jessup?” Notus grabbed a strand of her hair and twirled it around his finger.

“More like a nursemaid.” Regina leaned into Jessup's chest, savoring his arms around her.

“Oh, I've been a bad boy, haven't I?” Notus gave her a wicked grin. “Will you spank me, babysitter? I'd like that, very much.”

He turned his backside to her and seductively ran his hand over his tight pants. Regina wanted to do as he asked, but Jessup clutched her hand in his.

“Don't tempt me,” she said, turning her gaze away from him.

“Where's the fun in that?” His laugh was low. “See you tomorrow, kitten. Too bad your keeper has to tag along. We'd have much more fun with just the two of us.”

Notus disappeared as quickly as Matlyn had, and Jessup squeezed her shoulder. “Do I want to know what happened?”

“I seem to be on a roll today for failures. She's angry that I've made myself your slave, and my punishment is Notus.”

“You're not a slave, although playing out a fantasy with that particular theme intrigues me.” He nibbled on her ear, then traced his fingers over her shoulder. “If her penalty is making us spend time with the child, we can endure it together.”

Regina laid her head to one side, rubbing her cheek against his hand. She opened her mouth to protest, but Jessup captured her lips in a deep kiss. His tongue invaded her mouth, and she surrendered to his charms.

*“Don't speak out loud,”* his voice sounded in her mind. *“Both of them will be listening.”*

She followed his lead, sending her thoughts into his mind. *“Don't you see? If we have to play nursemaid to him, then we won't be here. She can do anything while*

*we're gone, including bringing in yet another dark faerie or sending out raiding parties to find the missing stone."*

*"We'll find a way to monitor her. In the meantime you need to steady yourself. Remember that he thinks we're on Matlyn's side, so watch what you say around him. And you know what spending time with him means. It will include—"*

*"Yes, I know what it will include."* Not that having sex with Notus would be difficult, at least physically. He was a handsome faerie who would undoubtedly bring her a great deal of pleasure. *"I can see it all swirling down the drain."*

*"Listen to me, young lady. You are being very negative, and I won't have it. Do you understand?"*

*"Yes."* She fought back tears as an image appeared of Matlyn standing on a dais with Monk at her side. Around them everything was in flames, and people were screaming in agony. *"But—"*

*"No more."* His hand came down on her ass, the sting making her inhale sharply. *"Have I made my point?"*

*"I think not."* She grasped his shirt as his hand slapped her other ass cheek. She closed her eyes and savored the burn. *"I still think you should...oh!"*

Two more slaps made her eyes roll back in pleasure. She did love being spanked, reveled in the feel of his hand slapping her bottom. It sent tingles of pleasure through her and made her forget, even momentarily, the problems that surrounded them.

*"I thought I was the one up for the spanking."* Notus was standing a few feet away, watching as Jessup's hand came down on her ass repeatedly. The dark faerie's hand crept to his crotch. *"How does one join this party?"*

*"You're not on the guest list."* Jessup turned her before he wrapped his arms around her.

*"No? Perhaps we should let the lady answer that question,"* Notus replied.

“If you want to fuck, there are plenty of witches available to you.” Regina tried to keep her voice calm and even. “All you have to do is ask.”

“Very well. Regina, I'd like to fuck you.” He lifted an eyebrow and fixed a seductive glance on her. “Please.”

“I didn't mean myself.” Too bad her body's reactions negated her words. Watching him stroke himself had turned her on. Her nipples, already taut from Jessup's delicious slaps to her ass, hardened even more. She imagined herself as the filling of a dark faerie sandwich, with Notus slamming into her pussy while Jessup fucked her ass.

Oh damn. If she wasn't careful, just the idea of their cocks inside her would send her soaring into oblivion.

Behind her, Jessup tensed, and she knew he had felt her reaction. “*See, it won't be so bad,*” he said in her mind. “*It is, after all, just sex.*”

Notus narrowed his eyes at them, and for a moment she thought he'd intercepted Jessup's message. But then his face lightened and he winked. “Until tomorrow, then.”

He vanished again, and Regina relaxed in Jessup's arms. “What does he like to do?”

“I think he's made that abundantly clear.” Jessup pinched her nipple. “Watching you spank him will be great fun indeed. Or maybe I'll spank the both of you. That might be even more fun.”

## Chapter Five

Regina took a bite of her toast, the orange marmalade sweet. Eating the sweet food tickled her tongue and helped her block out what she was seeing before her. Matlyn sat across the room, feeding her new “pet.” Regina knew the new play toy's attire was for her benefit; she was naked except for a chain around her neck that Regina was sure was a choke collar that Matlyn held tightly in her hand. When Matlyn tugged on it, the young witch yelped in pain, and Regina felt sympathy for her. The woman would suffer because of Matlyn's anger with Regina.

“Did she do that with you?”

She bristled at Notus's question. The urge to tell him it was none of his fucking business practically burned her tongue. Instead, she chose to ignore it.

“You have specific plans for today?”

“Too personal?” He winked at her. “I understand. Where is Jessup this morning?”

“He had a few things to attend to but will be with us shortly.” She washed down her toast with a few sips of tea. “You didn't answer my question.”

“I'd love to explore the castle, or *schloss*, as they call it in Germany.” He toyed with his own food, his gaze darting over to where Matlyn continued to torment the woman.

“You do realize this one is of Matlyn's making? If you want to visit a real castle, we should go to Heidelberg, or maybe Munich. This country is loaded with castles.”

“Yes, it is, but I'd like to explore my new home first and get to know you a little better. We can't do that while we're fighting tourists. Plus, I've seen those places, many times over.”

Frustration, building on that which was already present, surged through her. If she wasn't careful, she was going to blow her cool, and that wouldn't do at all.

“All right. If we're not going to visit the countryside today, then why don't you tell me how you and Jessup met? He's been very quiet about that since you appeared.”

“He's just angry because I'm here and he knows that I'd be able to, shall we say, tickle your fancy.”

He looked down at the V between her legs, and she knew what he really meant was play with her clit.

“But how people get to know each other is such a boring question, don't you think? Let's talk instead of naming cocks. I'm surprised he never mentioned to you that his dick goes by the formal name of—”

There was a loud clap of thunder, and Notus's chair tipped backward, sending the dark faerie onto his back. Around them people scattered, except for Matlyn, who watched the proceedings with interest.

Instead of a yelp of anger and pain, Notus laughed, a loud, hearty sound that made Regina stare at him in confusion as he lifted himself back up to his feet.

“Jessup, did I touch a nerve?”

“I'll thank you to keep your memories to yourself.”

Now this was odd. Despite the thunder and the way he'd knocked Notus from his seat, Jessup's voice didn't hold that much anger. What was that about?

“I see,” Notus replied, calmly picking up his tea. “I suppose in the context of this dining room it wouldn't make much sense. But if you like, I can tell her mine too.”

“Notus.” Jessup pushed him back in his seat. “Eat your food.”

Was Jessup smiling? There was just a hint of it tweaking the sides of his mouth, and Regina stifled a laugh. “You realize you’ve both made me very curious about what you’re keeping from me. Spill it.”

Jessup slowly turned his gaze to her. “You need to eat too. This discussion is closed.”

“For now.” Notus sat back down and stabbed a large sausage link. He took a huge bite off it, keeping the sausage near his mouth and moaning as if he were having an orgasm. “Delicious.”

“Such a child,” Jessup replied. He sat down, then put a sausage on his plate. “Have we made a plan for today?”

“Notus wants to explore the castle.” Regina watched them eat, wondering if, in his younger years, Jessup had been as playful as Notus was being right now. She knew her lover had topped the two-hundred-and-fifty mark a year earlier, because Matlyn hosted a huge orgy for the event. Not that someone could tell his age by looking at him. The same could be said for the other man sitting at the table. How old was...

“One hundred and forty two,” Jessup said around a mouthful of food. He swallowed, then downed a glass of juice. “He’d like you to think he’s much younger than that, but I know the truth.”

“Who’s spilling secrets now?”

Jessup shrugged at Notus’s comment. “I think I’m allowed, since you’re butting into a situation that you know absolutely nothing about.”

“Is that right?” Notus spelled away his dirty dishes. “Shall I tell you what I know?”

The room grew dark, and then large lights clicked on, illuminating Notus, now wearing a suit and sitting behind the desk of what appeared to be a news program. A large inverted pentagram was painted on the wall behind him, and Regina felt a cold wisp of air pass through her.

“And now we turn our attention, ladies and gentlemen, to news of extreme importance. As you all know, that wonderfully wicked witch Garmund Monk is still trapped in the pentagram put together by our horrible counterparts, the good witches. Things were looking up for a while when our heroic warriors managed to steal three of the five stones keeping Monk asleep in his prison.

“Unfortunately the do-gooders managed to retrieve one of the stones. We still have the garnet and bloodstone, though, and should have the amethyst back soon. Don't you worry, evil lovers. Come Samhain we will prevail, and all will be right with *our* world.”

The desk disappeared, and Notus was once again wearing jeans and a dark, long-sleeved pullover. “Information like that, Jessup?”

“Seems I underestimated you.”

“You always did, I think.”

Regina saw a hint of defiance in Notus's eyes.

“I'm more than just a hard dick.”

“Which is such a shame.” Matlyn was beside the table now, her new toy trailing in her wake. “Having a nice, hard dick should be more than enough to join in the fun with these two. They don't need more than that.”

“Ouch.” Notus shook his head. “That's a nasty thing to say about people who have served you for so long and with such loyalty.”

A dark cloud seemed to pass over Regina's face, and her ears burned. The look Matlyn fixed on her felt as if it would set her on fire.

*“She knows!”*

*“Easy, my love.”*

It was as if Jessup were stroking her, his touch gentle and reassuring.

*“She's playing a game with us. Don't let down your guard and give us away. She knows nothing, or else we'd be dead.”*

“Going to tour the castle today, are you? Well, have them show you the playrooms. Regina is particularly fond of the BDSM room, which is full of whips and chains and lots of racks.” She pulled on the leash, and the young woman behind her gasped in pain. “Enjoy yourselves.”

She walked from the room, and Regina tried to get her nerves under control.

*“Regina! Stop it this instant.”*

She felt her pulse quicken as Jessup's voice sounded in her mind.

*“Do you understand me?”*

“Yes, Sir.” Why was this happening? For the last eight years she'd been true to her mission and never felt a whiff of fear that she'd be caught. And now, with only days to go, she was falling apart.

“You shouldn't be ashamed about enjoying a good whipping, Regina.” Had Notus been talking all this time? Did he think that's why she was upset? If so, that was a good thing. “I, myself, enjoy being spanked. It can bring such a rush. But I like to give as well as receive. What about you?”

“No.” She'd tried that a few times under Matlyn's orders. The witch had always been angry that Regina didn't seem to “*put her heart*” into the beating.

“Pity.”

“Don't worry,” Jessup said. “I'll give you a nice, stinging whipping, Notus. All you have to do is ask for it.”

“I just might. If I remember correctly, you wield a mean crop.” Notus turned a sly gaze on her. “Does he still, Regina?”

“Yes.” She closed her eyes and imagined the Jessup-induced strike of leather on her behind. “It's quite delicious.”

“We'll have to try it together, then.” He stood suddenly, running his hands down his thighs. The bulge in his pants showed how excited the idea made him. “Let's get started, shall we? I'm eager to see what this schloss has to offer.”

\* \* \*



He was being used. And it sucked. Big time. The witch's words earlier had been meant to hit out at Regina and Jessup, basically saying they would fuck anything. But they had been a slight against him too.

*All you are is a hard dick, chosen specifically because of your past with Jessup.* She knew he could get under the faerie's skin and do it quickly. But why was she doing it? She had the upper hand in everything that was happening, since she still had control of two of the stones.

Without those magical elements, the crew holding Monk would not be able to reinforce their spell on Samhain, and Matlyn would be able to free the powerful witch. So why the hell bring Notus into the mix in an obvious attempt to piss off the two people who used to be her right hand, or hands?

What had they done to piss her off? He doubted they would answer his questions. Right now they were playing along with her little game, leading him on a tour through the castle, showing him a medical ward that Matlyn had set up to help restore Monk's body.

"She could just magically do it," he said, trying to make it seem as if he were paying attention.

"Matlyn will be drained after the ceremony," Regina said. "She doesn't want to take any chances that something will happen to her—"

"Her prize?" Notus took a step closer to Regina. He gently ran his finger down her forearm, keeping his gaze on Jessup to see what emotions this move would bring about. The older faerie just watched him with no sign of jealousy, so very different from last night and even earlier while they ate.

"I don't think she sees Monk as a prize." Regina's voice was low and even.

"Sure she does," Notus said, putting his hand up to stroke the shifter's brilliant red hair. "Both sides see him that way. The only difference is one wants to kill him, and the other wants to use him to take over the world. I would say that's a pretty big prize. At a carnival he would be one of the trophies on the top shelf, the one very few people would be able to attain."

*The real question is, why aren't you helping her perfect her ringtoss skills so she wins in the end?* But it was too soon to ask that question, Notus knew. Something had obviously happened to break up their happy little unit. But until he figured that out, it would be best if he just played along, visited all the different places they had planned, and enjoyed all the carnal activities he could while the getting was good.

“Now that we've seen all the technical places, why don't we move on to the fun ones? Was Matlyn wrong when she said the tiger enjoyed the bondage rooms?” He ran his tongue over his upper lip, transferring his gaze from Jessup to Regina. Was it his imagination, or did her heart rate seem to increase?

“I'll just watch the first time.” He continued to stroke her arm. “I want you to note, though, that I watched yesterday, so I should be able to play this time. I'm willing to wait a little bit longer, though, before I take my place at the plate.”

When neither of them replied, he put his hands together as if he were holding a baseball bat. “It's a sports metaphor.”

“Thanks for clearing that up,” Jessup said, finally moving over to displace Notus. “May I just say that your spectator status yesterday was not a consensual thing. That means you're still on the bench until I, as the coach, call you into the game.” There was a slight pause before Jessup inclined his head. “That's a sports metaphor, Notus.”

“Thanks for clearing that up.” Notus winked at Regina. “Now, let's see about rounding the bases, shall we?”

## Chapter Six

Regina wasn't sure she was ready for this. It wasn't as if Notus hadn't seen her well and truly fucked yesterday, but she hadn't been aware she was putting on a show. It was different when someone was sitting on a chair, looking at you as if you were the main course at a dying man's dinner.

She tried not to think about how the dying part could come true for so many if they failed at their mission. They didn't really have time to be fucking around. Literally.

But not fucking around would raise eyebrows. She trained her senses on the bloodstone, hoping to feel something, anything, from it. She felt a tinge of power, and her heart felt as if it skipped a beat.

Had someone new shown up that she'd been unaware of? Or was the elder's cryptic message of “*no more*” a ruse? Maybe they'd been afraid someone had followed her and was listening to their communication. Maybe there was a triad in the woods even now.

As much as she liked that idea, she needed to remember what else he'd said. “*All gone.*” She'd taken both phrases to mean they would no longer help her. But what if she'd been wrong? What if, even now, there was a triad around awaiting instructions from her? Maybe they were wondering why she was “all gone” and not helping them recover the bloodstone.

She needed to find time to go for a run tonight, see if she could scope out the area and feel something that would identify the people she sought.

There was a week until Samhain, and Matlyn could do nothing before then. But the fact they were cutting it so close made Regina more nervous than anything had in a long while.

"Stop thinking so much," Jessup whispered in her ear.

She wanted to tell him that she needed to think more, to figure out the problem, but she couldn't do that right now unless she did it internally, and she didn't want Notus wondering what was happening between them. If he thought they were keeping secrets from him, he would do his best to discover those secrets, and that wouldn't be a good thing.

"There's quite a nice selection of toys here." She glanced over to where Notus ran his fingers over the various crops, floggers, paddles, and canes that hung from hooks on the wall. "My ass is dying to taste a few of them."

"Perhaps I should string you up, then." Jessup massaged her shoulder as he spoke to the dark faerie.

"Not yet." He turned a wanton gaze on Regina. "I want to see the little tiger get spanked."

He turned back to the wall and grasped a round, wooden paddle. "This one. I think she'll enjoy the taste of it."

Regina felt her insides go cold, and she glanced at Jessup, who stared at Notus in shock. "It's her favorite." His voice was low. "How did you know?"

What was Jessup asking? Had Notus somehow probed her mind without her knowing and pulled out the image of her over Jessup's lap, the paddle coming down on her bottom? He had used that very implement on her several times, always at her bidding. She loved the feel of the smooth wood on her bottom as she lay across her lover's thighs.

"It's what I would enjoy," Notus said as he walked toward them, swinging the paddle from his fingertips. "I think Regina and I are quite a bit alike."

Something wasn't being said, but Regina wasn't sure what it was. Jessup took the paddle from Notus and walked toward the bench that sat against the wall. He sat in the middle and fixed a gaze on her, waving his hand and spelling away her clothes.

"Come here, Regina." Jessup's command made her tingle, especially as it was mixed with a deep groan of approval as Notus raked his gaze over her naked body. She looked from one dark faerie to the other, her nipples tightening and her clit throb.

"Now." Jessup didn't raise his voice or seem in the least bit angry. But she knew better than to keep him waiting when he'd given her instructions. She walked to him slowly and lowered herself over his lap in anticipation of a good, hard spanking.

This particular activity always seemed to clear her mind and help her gain focus. She closed her eyes and awaited the first strike. The room grew silent as Jessup rubbed the wood over her bottom, the smooth coolness of it making her shiver in anticipation.

The tingling continued, and her pussy grew moist, her need for the painful pleasure growing. As always, Jessup knew exactly when that happened, and he landed the first strike on her bottom, making her body jolt. A moan of pleasure escaped her as he gave her another swat, then another, and another.

She stayed tense, savoring the stinging feel of the spanking. She tightened her thighs together and rubbed herself against Jessup's thigh. The friction on her clit was fantastic, and as another swat landed, she cried out.

"Please, please, more."

Behind her she could hear Notus's excited breathing, and she wondered what he was thinking as he watched the paddle come down on her ass repeatedly.

"Beautiful," Notus whispered as Jessup increased the intensity of the swats, the sting turning into a harsh burn.

She never counted the number of times he struck her bottom; she only relished each one, anticipating more and the wonderful orgasm it would produce. The swats grew harder, and Regina relaxed her body, giving herself over to the pain of the paddling and soaring with each new strike.

One, two, three hard swats, and she came with such intensity that she thought she might faint. Jessup kept a tight grasp on her, the paddle still coming down but with less force until finally it was still, lying against her ass, which seemed as if it were on fire.

She wiggled her bottom in a soundless plea for more, but he ignored her. He stroked her back, the soft touch at odds with the hardness she'd just experienced. Then suddenly he grasped her hair and tugged her head up.

"Ah, yes," she whispered. And then her eyes widened as she realized that Notus's cock bobbed in front of her mouth.

"Stand up," Jessup ordered, and she obeyed immediately, her gaze still glued to Notus's hard cock, the tip of it glistening with wetness.

By the Goddess, she wanted to taste him, take him deep into her mouth. But that would leave...her gaze drifted to Jessup's crotch. She could see the hard length of him pressing against his pants, and she wanted to put her fingers on him, release him, and stroke his hardness.

Without being told what to do, Notus climbed onto the bench and sat on the padded back, his legs spread wide.

"Bend over and suck him." Jessup rubbed the paddle over her throbbing bottom. "I want to see him sliding in and out of your mouth."

He was standing just to the side of her, and she cut her gaze to him, surprised to see a look of intense desire there. He'd watched her with Matlyn and with other witches before, but he'd never shown the need that was on his face right now.

"I won't tell you again, Regina." He rubbed the paddle on her ass again. "I had to tell you twice to come to me for a spanking, didn't I?"

“Yes.”

“Maybe a few more swats will remind you to obey me.”

She shook her head and then turned back to Notus. He had a firm grip on his cock, holding it in offering to her. She put her hands on the couch to steady herself, then flicked her tongue over the head of his prick, letting her tongue part the slit. The salty taste of him invaded her senses, making her want more.

She slid her mouth over him, continuing to tongue the head as she closed her mouth.

“Oh, that's incredible,” Notus said, his voice breathy. “Such a sweet feeling.”

She pulled back her tongue and took more of him into her mouth, sliding him in and out, ever mindful of the fact Jessup watched. If only he would move behind her, slide his cock into her tight wetness.

Instead he stood and watched, one hand at his side while the other stroked the wood against her ass. She tried to concentrate on what she was doing and not on what he was thinking. It had been quite some time since they'd played with others. Would he think differently of their time with his old friend than he did with the witches here? He'd obviously had a bond with Notus at some time. What had happened to break it?

Regina tried to clear her mind and keep her focus on the cock she was sucking. In her position she couldn't get as much of him into her mouth as she would have liked. She lowered her hips, only to feel Jessup tap her on the shoulder.

“Keep that ass high in the air.” She did as he asked, wanting to ask why. Was he going to fuck her after all? But if he did, Notus needed to move from the back of the couch to the seat to make it more comfortable for her.

Within minutes, though, she realized they both had other ideas. Notus pulled his cock from her mouth and put his hands on either side of her head to hold her still.

The paddle came down, five swats on each side, the sting spreading through her body like wildfire. She gasped and wiggled her ass, barely catching her breath before Notus's cock pressed against her lips, seeking entry.

She sucked him in greedily, taking as much as she could at this angle, snaking her tongue out of her mouth to run up and down the length.

"Thank you, sweet tiger," he whispered, stroking her hair. When he pulled back and held her in place, she knew what was coming. This time the swats landed on her lower ass, the paddle straying at times to her thighs.

Regina groaned out her approval before Notus slipped back into her mouth. He pulsed and throbbed under her tongue, and she took as much joy in his pleasure as she did her own. They repeated the stroking and spanking three more times, and each time the swats ended, Regina sent a mental plea to Jessup to fuck her, to please clasp her hips and slide into her pussy.

He ignored her, though, continuing to watch while she sucked, then spanked her while Notus stroked her hair and cheeks.

*"Jessup! Don't...please..."*

*"Don't what, sweet Regina?"*

It was the first time he'd answered her plea, and she wasn't exactly sure how to answer his question. The blunt truth would probably do best. *"Fuck me! I'm begging you."* It came out as more of a whine than a beg, and his chuckle infuriated her. She wanted to scream at him, but before she could get anything out either mentally or verbally, his deep voice boomed out.

*"Notus, fill her. Regina, suck it all down."*

Notus pulled his cock away from her mouth, his hand in her hair, keeping her in place as he jacked himself. She kept her mouth open, ready to suck down what he offered. As the first salty taste hit her mouth, Jessup lowered the paddle on her bottom again, and his free fingers found her clit. He stroked her as she tried to capture all Notus gave her.



When she'd swallowed the last, he jumped from the couch, and new fingers joined the ones already driving her crazy. Someone's thumb slipped into her pussy, rubbing against the walls, the pressure increasing her need to fuck.

"Please! Someone fuck me!" She clawed at the couch as they continued to stroke her, fingers drifting over her clit and slit as they ignored her request.

Regina closed her eyes and bucked back into their touch. She could sense her orgasm building, threatening to overtake her at any moment. The only thing keeping it back was the two men behind her, who seemed to be able to read when she was close. When that happened they stopped their fingers, letting the sensations drop away before they started again.

They worked as a well-oiled machine, and deep inside she knew they'd done this before. That idea didn't bother her, though. What bothered her was the idea they could keep this up for hours, leaving her in a suspended state of near-orgasm that would leave her drained and straining for completion.

When the need became almost unbearable, she whimpered. The thumb inside her slipped out and was replaced by two fingers laced together. They thrust in and out of her as someone's fingers stopped stroking her clit, taking it instead between his thumb and forefinger and pinching.

Regina came immediately, her legs shaking and threatening to drop out from under her. Someone's arm cradled her under her stomach as the two faeries continued to stroke her. As her orgasm died away, their touches turned gentle, soothing her as they lowered her to the couch.

When she was down, she gazed up at Jessup. Notus stood just behind him. Both of them were smiling, their lips turned up into sensual smirks that made her giggle.

"So good," she said, reaching out to touch Jessup's thigh. "You need..."

"Don't worry about me. Just relax and enjoy, my love."

She thought about arguing, but her eyelids were drifting down, the need to sleep overtaking her. "Don't have time," she whispered. "Need to find—"

“Hush, Regina.” Jessup's voice was harsh, and she closed her mouth. Her eyes drifted shut as she heard Notus say, “Need to find what?”

## Chapter Seven

Jessup glanced over at the bed where Regina lay tossing and turning. He'd hoped that a good threesome would calm her down, let her forget, even in her sleep, about the bloodstone and the looming deadline they faced.

That didn't seem to be the case, even though she'd come hard twice during their play. He stretched his legs out in front of him and clasped his hands over his stomach, keeping his gaze fixed on her.

She continued to toss and turn, and he knew her hair would be a mess of tangles before she awoke. Watching her comb it out would make him hard. Hell, who was he kidding? Everything about her made him hard.

Watching her toss and turn put a knot in his stomach. He hated to see her so stressed. His little tiger possessed a sense of loyalty unlike anything he'd ever seen, and even after being basically dumped by the elders, she was still worried about following through on her job.

A huge part of him wanted to grab the bloodstone while she was asleep. They'd spelled the garnet, hadn't they? Surely he could do it with the last stone, take it, transport it to England and the elders, and be done with it. Then he could take Regina and disappear, maybe somewhere in South America, deep in the jungle where the trees would hopefully hide them from Matlyn's bounty hunters, because she would definitely send them out.

Unless he killed the witch. That would be the perfect ending to him, taking a knife and slicing the woman's throat, watching her bleed out all over the floor. Goddess but he hated that woman, not only because of the way she'd used the woman he loved but because of what she'd done to so many others.

If she were gone, would her followers cease to exist? They weren't very powerful. Only one witch before her, Doc, had possessed any real power, and he was dead at the hands of another triad.

If Matlyn were gone, the remainder of her acolytes would fall apart. Maybe he should do it now, go to her with the pretense of sex, tell her he wanted to fuck her. Then, when she was distracted, he would just snap her neck. No, that wouldn't work. She knew he had no desire for her; he never had, really. He'd only fucked her because it kept her close.

And, although he hadn't known it at the time, it had brought him Regina. It was because of her that he couldn't allow Matlyn's plan to succeed.

The only problem with the plan was convincing Regina. Not that she didn't want Matlyn dead. She believed what the elders told her, though: that the stone must be taken by the triad and the ceremony to neutralize Monk must occur on Samhain.

They were all about pomp and ceremony. He knew that striking now would catch the witch off guard and give them the upper hand. A larger problem than getting close enough to Matlyn to kill her would be Regina's reaction.

His tiger would see his plan as a betrayal to her, and it would harm their relationship, possibly forever. That meant the only thing keeping Matlyn alive right now was his love for Regina.

They were going to have to do something, though. If she didn't identify a triad soon, it would be too late. They had less than a week until Samhain, five days to be exact, and they weren't going to get help from the outside.

*Fuck!* He conjured a beer and took a huge swig, wishing alcohol had more of an effect on him.

Regina turned her head, then changed positions, shifting onto her side, facing him. He knew when she moved that way she was close to waking up. She would be angry with him for letting her sleep for so long, but she needed it.

He thought about the events of the day and how they made him feel. He'd expected to feel a huge spurt of jealousy when he'd watched Regina swallow Notus's cock with such obvious hunger. Instead he'd felt arousal, such deep desire that his prick had swollen, and it had taken every inch of willpower to keep from going behind Regina and filling her sweet pussy.

The sex had been carefully planned, sort of a test run for the main events yet to come. He knew they'd have to kick up the carnal events to keep Notus occupied. If nothing else, his old friend was a horny faerie, one of the horniest Jessup had ever met, besides himself.

His sex drive complemented Regina's, which was extremely high too. He had worried, though, that she would balk at the idea of fucking Notus, partly because she was afraid it would anger him. That's why it had been important that he watch the first encounter and let her know how much he enjoyed seeing her suck his old friend.

"What time is it?" Her voice was sluggish, and he smiled as she sat up.

"It's a little after six." He got up and walked to the end of the bed. He sat down and ran his fingers through her soft hair. With his other hand he erected a bubble over the bed, something he'd used before to keep their conversations private. "I told Notus we'd enjoy dinner in Düsseldorf at a beer cellar along the Rhine."

She reached out and stroked his thigh. "Beer cellar? I thought they were called gardens."

He shrugged and traced his finger down her jaw. "In my day they were called cellars. I guess now they're known as gardens. Not that it matters much. We'll have some bratwurst and sauerkraut and drink a few beers."

"And be away from the castle yet again. I want to try and get in with Matlyn, see what she's up to now. The longer we're away from here, the more—"

"You're sounding like a looped record." Jessup pushed her back on the bed and climbed on top of her.

Her giggle made his groin tighten. "You mean a broken record?"

"Don't correct me, you little imp." He kissed her chin, running his lips up to hers, capturing them in a slow, sweet kiss. He was surprised when she relaxed into it. Regina wasn't the type who enjoyed soft, sweet kisses.

"I may be looping," she said when he broke the kiss, "but maybe by saying it over and over you'll understand. We have five days. Five days. We need to stay close to her. We can't do that if we're out getting drunk."

"I understand perfectly, and you know it. There's no triad here. You haven't felt the stone, have you?"

She blinked, and he wondered if she was deciding what she should tell him. "I felt a hint of it earlier in the day. It made me wonder what would happen if I got closer to it. Maybe we should try and find it today instead of going to Düsseldorf."

Regina relaxed into his arms, and he stroked her hip. "That won't work," she said before he could get the words out. "Matlyn expects us to take Notus out."

"Right. She'll be on the lookout for us." He settled her in his arm, cradling her head against his chest. "The hint of power you felt could have been someone brushing up against it, or it could have been Matlyn trying to use it. We both know what happens when someone who shouldn't touches the stone."

He sent her a mental image of the two of them as they tried to take the garnet the first time, before they'd worked out a spell to convince it they meant it no harm.

"It's how they stole it in the first place," she whispered. "Maybe we can do the same thing with the bloodstone."

Jessup felt a surge of pleasure mixed with surprise. "Now you're coming around to my way of thinking. I like it."

"The only problem with that idea is the bloodstone is much more powerful than the garnet. It's the cornerstone of the pentagram, really."

"It's the stone of the warrior," Jessup said. He considered various spells he could use to trick the stone into letting them touch it without sending off sparks.

“Not only that, but it increases a person's courage, can heal the sick, and ensure a safe delivery for pregnant women. Plus—” She sat up and he did the same, smiling at the bright look on her face.

She'd obviously stumbled upon something she hadn't thought about before.

“Bloodstone can be used to help communicate with spirits.”

“Something that I'm not capable of, and neither are you, so I can't see how that will help us.” He lay back down and laced his fingers behind his head.

“But, if I were dead...” She turned to look at him, her mouth wide open, her eyebrows lifted high. The look told him she thought she'd just discovered the perfect solution to their problem.

“Excuse me?” He fixed a malignant stare on her.

“The Kellen incident.”

“The what?” He couldn't believe she would even consider being dead as an option.

“Kellen Rainey, part of the amethyst triad. When Matlyn was trying to rope him into her circle, she had me fuck him, and told him that, in order to prove his worth, he had to kill me while he was inside me. What he didn't know was that Matlyn had bespelled me. She was testing his worth, she said. My body shut down, but my spirit was alive, and I could see and hear everything. If I could do it again, then—”

“Absolutely not.” His heart shrank and his body grew cold at the idea of Regina's death, whether it was faked or not.

“It's not as if I haven't done it before.” She spun around and gathered herself up onto her knees before she leaned forward so that her palms were on either side of his thighs. Her face was inches away from his. “I'm not asking you to kill me. I'm asking you to release my spirit, just for a while so I can communicate with the stone. Maybe it can tell me—”

“I said no.” He kept his voice firm. “This discussion is closed.”

She poked her finger into his chest, the obvious anger on her face making him smile for the first time since she'd brought up the idea.

"Don't you dare say something like that to me! It's a good thing I love you, or else I'd tell you to go straight to hell. This is a good plan. A great plan. The only plan we've come up with. Do you recall our timetable? Five days! Five. I mean..."

He listened to her as she ranted, her face growing redder by the minute. Finally, when she was gasping for breath and her voice was a note that could shatter glass, he put up a finger.

"The barrier around the bed will only hold so much negative energy," he said as she closed her mouth. "You need to watch your tongue before Matlyn comes to see what we're fighting about. I realize you're angry with me, but you need to realize how bad an idea this truly is. Matlyn has wards on her room, and you're not going to get in there, in either physical or spiritual form, unless she wants you to, and right now she doesn't."

When she started to speak, he held up a finger. "Plus, there's no telling whether or not the stone is still in her room. She could have built a special place for it and kept us in the dark."

He watched the import of his words seep into her, saw her anger turn into dejection. She moved to the bottom of the bed and sat down with her legs crossed in front of her.

"I'm sorry, love, but we will find a way. I promise you."

She gave him the slightest of nods, and he crawled down to her, cupped her head, and kissed her soundly, letting his tongue linger in her mouth.

"Notus is here, in the room," she said when they pulled apart. "I guess it's babysitting time."

"Yes, for now. After dinner we'll do what babysitters always do with their charges. We'll play a little game back here at the castle, an alternative version of hide and seek. Wards that might keep us out might not work on our new friend."



He snapped his fingers, and the dome around the bed disappeared. Notus sat in a chair, his legs propped up on the nightstand near the bed. "And what were you two discussing in private?"

"If we'd wanted you to know, we would have invited you into the circle," Jessup said, standing up and then clothing himself in black pants and a tan silk shirt.

He snapped his fingers and turned to Regina. He'd dressed her in an off-the-shoulder reddish orange blouse that hugged her figure and complemented her bright eyes and brilliant hair, which he'd left hanging loose. Her slacks were white.

"Now I'm underdressed," Notus said, looking down. "I thought we were going to a beer garden."

"We can still look nice." Jessup gave him a look before snapping his fingers again. The dark faerie's jeans and long-sleeved T-shirt changed to a dark pair of slacks and maroon silk shirt.

"You could almost be twins," Regina said, glancing back and forth between them. "Well, except for the differing colors. The style is exactly the same."

"I like it," Jessup said, running his hands down his sleeves.

"It may be you, but it's not me." Notus stood, and within seconds he was dressed in black jeans and a white turtleneck, the color contrasting sharply with his black hair. "Now I think we're ready."

\* \* \*

Regina couldn't help but notice the admiring glances her dinner companions were getting from women in the beer garden. Not that she could blame those women. Jessup and Notus were, by far, the most attractive men in the room.

Right now they were laughing about something one of them had said that she hadn't overheard. She'd been too busy watching the crowd and sipping her beer. She thought she recognized a table of people sitting in the corner, two men and a woman who she was pretty sure were witches serving Matlyn.

Why would Matlyn have them followed? Wasn't it enough that they were doing exactly as she asked? Of course if she allowed herself to believe it, she knew exactly why they had tails, and not of the furry variety.

Matlyn knew what they were up to, even if she didn't want to admit it to herself. She'd thought it before but she knew it now. The idea made the beer in her stomach feel as if it would come back up.

*"Stop it!"*

She jumped slightly as Jessup's voice took over her mind.

*"You're thinking too much and allowing yourself to think the worst. I keep trying to tell you, if she knew, we'd be dead."*

She didn't answer him, afraid she'd go off and Notus would question what they were talking about. Jessup started taking again, laughing about something that had happened with the two dark faeries sometime in their past.

When she saw Jessup casually glance toward the table of witches, then shrug, she knew he didn't take them seriously.

Best just to ignore them, or maybe take them on a wild goose chase. That wouldn't work, though, because if they popped from place to place, Notus would question what they were doing. Damn Notus. He was screwing up everything, which was exactly what Matlyn had planned.

Somehow, Regina didn't think he had a clue about what was really happening. He was just along for the ride, thinking he would be rewarded at the end with a great amount of power.

"Damn her to hell," Regina whispered, shocked when the table went silent.

"Damn who to hell?" Notus gave her a wide-eyed innocent look, and when she glanced over at Jessup she got just the opposite, his gaze burning into her.

"Excuse me?"

"What you just said, damn her to hell. It's the second thing you've said today that makes me wonder what's going on."

She took another drink, then another and another as he continued to talk. "After our wonderful time this morning, you said you had to look for something, but you never said what it was, and Jessup told me you were just rambling as you fell asleep. Somehow I don't think that's true. So tell me what you had to search for."

In that moment she saw the dark faerie in a totally different light. In the day since he'd arrived he'd been playful and trying to stir up trouble. But now she saw real intelligence in his eyes, as if he'd seen enough to know something was going on, something in addition to the upcoming Samhain ceremony, and he wanted to know exactly what it was.

She'd underestimated him as a sex-craved faerie who only thought about his dick. His dick...that was it. Maybe talking about his cock would distract him.

"I was wondering how I was going to grill you for the name of your cock. After all, I sucked it before I felt we were properly introduced."

"You're a little liar," he replied with a laugh. "It didn't seem to bother you when you were enjoying said cock. You seemed to get a lot of pleasure from it, even though you didn't know its proper name. But I'll go along with your inability to tell me the truth. You have to guess his name."

Better not to dwell on the fact he knew she was lying. She should also put the three witches across the room out of her mind. Jessup was right. Not acknowledging them was the way to go.

"Is it the name of an animal, vegetable, or mineral?"

"Well, I suppose you could say animal," Notus said after a minute of contemplation.

She looked at Jessup, hoping he would help her along. When he just shrugged, she wanted to slap him upside the head. "Thanks a lot."

"Anytime, my love." He winked at her before taking a swig from his beer. She noticed that as he did so, his eyes cut to the table of witches, who still occupied the corner.

“Humph.” She transferred her gaze to Notus. “Okay, it's an animal. That narrows it down a little. Is it of the four- or two-legged variety?”

Notus ran his fingers up the side of his long, slender beer stein. “No more answers for free. What will you give me if I tell you?”

“I think the question would be more of what I won't give you if you don't.”

Both men laughed, and Regina felt warmth spread through her.

“Feisty little one, aren't you?” Notus sat back, and when Jessup leaned over and kissed her, she could see a look of longing on the younger man's face. “I propose a little game, if you're interested.”

“What sort of game?” From the suspicious tone of Jessup's voice, she deduced that he'd been privy to some of Notus's games in the past and that he wasn't always thrilled with them.

“Nothing like what happened in Spain, I assure you.”

Regina sat up a little straighter. “Spain? What happened in—”

“Never you mind,” Notus said and took a pull from his beer. “I will write down the name and hide it somewhere in the castle. I'll give you two hours after I've hidden it to find it.”

It was as if he'd read her mind. In order to find the name they'd have to explore the castle again. Instead of focusing on his game, she would be on the lookout for the stone. Maybe if she saw it, it would give her information about the triad.

“Very well, I accept your challenge. If I win, I get to hear the story of how you two met.”

“And if I win, well...” He glanced at Jessup, an almost evil glint coming into his eyes. “Istanbul?”

“Oh my.” The tone in Jessup's voice told her that he might enjoy her losing the challenge. “That's an intriguing idea.”

“What does that mean?” She tried to probe her lover's mind, but he pushed her back out and she gasped. “Tell me.”

“Not yet,” Jessup whispered. “I want to see how this all plays out first.”

Regina nodded, then narrowed her eyes. “There's not some rule I don't know about, is there? Like a time limit? Or I have to guess the reasoning behind the name or something?”

The two faeries exchanged another look, and Jessup shrugged. Notus turned back to her and said, “I think I'll give you until midnight, and then—”

“Istanbul,” Jessup said, rubbing his hands together.

She could see the look of absolute desire—no, not desire, lust—in his eyes and she shivered. What the hell did they mean by Istanbul?

## Chapter Eight

The castle seemed colder than usual, even though two very hot dark faeries walked on either side of her. She glanced over at Jessup, who inclined his head toward her ever so slightly. He felt it too.

There was power in this part of the castle, a great deal of it centered here that she'd not felt anywhere else in the building. But it gave off an eerie feeling that made her shiver.

Had Matlyn brought in yet another dark faerie or something even more powerful to help her with the Samhain ceremony? With what Regina felt right now, it was entirely possible.

During their search for Notus's hidden clue, she'd focused her senses for any feeling of something different. There had now been two irregularities, the surge of power here and the fact that she'd been able to feel the bloodstone outside Matlyn's room. She wanted to check on it, make sure it knew she was still around, working to free it from what it would consider to be a prison.

They'd stood there for a few minutes while she'd pretended to search each room for whatever it was Notus had placed in the castle. She hadn't felt it, not one teeny little twinge of it. The thought had scared her half to death, and she'd thought for a moment she would break down, until Jessup had brushed up against her, gently squeezed her arm, and mentally told her not to panic and to remember that Notus watched her.

*“He could record everything you do, ready to report it back to Matlyn at the end of the night.”* His tone had been gentle and reassuring, and she'd wanted nothing

more than to go into his arms and feel them wrap around her. If she'd been snuggled up against his chest, she might feel a little better about things.

But that couldn't happen. She had to rely on the fact he was with her mentally, and she with him. She'd tried one more time to find the stone and was unable to do so. It was hard to concentrate on the game when she wanted nothing more than to find the bloodstone.

But that couldn't happen right now. It couldn't happen tomorrow either, when they were expected to continue babysitting Notus. Maybe she could give up, then take him back to the room and fuck his brains out. If he passed out, she could leave the bed and go on a search for the stone.

That wasn't going to happen, though. Wearing out a dark faerie with sex was not a possibility. Their stamina was legendary; she would pant for breath and beg for sleep before he would. Unless she spelled him. She quickly dismissed that idea. Sexual stamina wasn't the only thing faeries were known for. They had a high resistance against spells, unless they'd been stunned by energy bolts first, and she wouldn't do that. What chance did she have of putting him to sleep while she searched for the stone?

"Damn."

*"You need to give up."* Jessup gave her a serious look.

*"Never!"*

*"Make him think you've given up the search. Then we'll go back to the room and release some of that tension you're feeling right now. You'll think straighter after that."*

"You just want to fuck." She gave him a smile, well aware she'd spoken the words out loud and well aware of the response they would bring from the other dark faerie.

"Did someone mention fucking?" The heat pouring off Notus's body dispelled the cold she'd felt earlier. She drew a mental map of the castle and put an X on the spot where they were.

Later, after they'd played, she'd try to find a way to sneak back, explore a little more. Maybe she could find out exactly what was happening here.

"Don't worry, tiger, Istanbul will be fun for all of us." She turned to Notus, who licked his lips and ran his hand over his cock, which was already hard under his slacks.

"What is Istanbul, anyway?" Jessup stood behind her now, his hands on her shoulder. Notus moved in front, then pressed close to her. Her palms started to sweat, and she wondered exactly what they had in mind.

Notus leaned closer, and Regina took a step back. She had nowhere to go, since Jessup was right behind her. There was a hand on her hip, and one inching up her side toward her breast. Which one was which? She wasn't exactly sure who was touching her where right now. All she knew was that all thoughts of searching for the stone had vanished. All she could think about was the two of them inside her, moving in and out, sending her soaring as they had that afternoon.

When Notus's lips were inches away from hers, she swallowed hard and licked her lips. What they had planned was something good, she was sure of it. Maybe it wasn't such a bad idea to take a break. After all, they'd still have four days left until the ceremony. They'd get it done.

"Istanbul," Notus said, his lips inches away from hers.

He was going to kiss her. She wasn't much of a kisser, but right now it seemed as if it would be the most perfect of activities. Her palms sweat just a little bit more as he put his lips right next to hers. "Is a city in Turkey."

"Jerk!" She pushed against his chest, trying to stay angry as the two of them dissolved into laughter. "You're not going to tell me, are you?"

Four arms went around her, but she wasn't having any of it. She ducked under them and hurried down the hall, determined to put as much space between them as possible.



“Now, tiger, don't be that way.” Notus's voice seemed to caress her as invisible ropes wound around her arms and legs, stopping her in the middle of the hall. “Come back here, and let's play.”

“Here?” She tried to stretch out her arms to indicate the hallway, and when that failed she cried out in frustration. “Let me go!”

She glanced back to see them talking quietly. “Listen, you two, no making decisions without me. If we're playing a group thing, then it's the three of us, not two. That means I get to be in on the planning.”

They strutted toward her, and her body pulsed with need. Damn but they were sexy.

“Since you weren't in on the first Istanbul, you don't get to plan for the second one,” Jessup said. He took a strand of her hair and twisted it around his finger, tugging gently. “What we were discussing was the place to play. Both of us decided to use Notus's room, which isn't far from here.”

Regina wanted to say that was making decisions without her, but she was already going into this blind. What was one more thing?

“Let's go, then.” She made to take a step, almost falling when the feeling of flying took over. She giggled as they flitted down the hallway and through a door before landing on a huge bed in the middle of a room she was sure she'd never seen before.

“This looks like a sultan's bedroom,” she said, realizing that she was free of her magical bonds. She wiggled her hands and leaned down on her elbows as both men ran their hands up her calves.

“That was the point,” Notus replied, fixing a sexy stare on her. “I'm glad you approve.”

“I never said that.” She hoped she looked flirty. “Tell me—were you in an overdone bedroom in Istanbul, too?”

Notus reared back, a wounded look on his face. For a minute she thought he might catapult off the bed. "Overdone?"

Jessup's chuckle brought about one of her own. "Just a little, don't you think?" The teasing took the edge off her nerves. Giving a blowjob was one thing. Having sex with the two of them inside her, which she was sure was about to happen, was another thing altogether. She hadn't done anything like this in a good, long while.

"What sort of nasty things do the two of you have planned?" She shifted her gaze between them. "And why are we repeating something you've already done with someone else?"

"Who said we were repeating something?"

Jessup stood and started to unbutton his shirt, which she thought was a little unusual for him. When he undressed he generally did it magically. Watching his fingers work the buttons was very sexy, and desire settled in the pit of her stomach and crept downward, making her clit tingle.

If she had her way, Notus would disappear and it would just be her and Jessup. She turned toward Notus, who was standing on the other side of the bed, his fingers mimicking Jessup's movements.

On second thought, maybe having bookend faeries in bed might not be a bad thing.

"Regina? Answer my question."

She looked back at him and blinked. His shirt was open, revealing his muscular chest, but it was still tucked into his pants. The tingle in her clit turned into a throb. "What was the question?"

"You know perfectly well what it was. Tell me."

Goddess above, she loved it when he used that tone of voice, all commanding and dark. It made her shiver, and she ran her hands up her thighs.

"I believe you talked about how much fun Istanbul was. That's what made me think you'd done it before."

Jessup untucked his shirt and nodded toward Notus. She turned to watch the younger faerie do the same thing. The throb had turned into a pulse that she thought might just send her over the edge just by watching them undress.

“Not necessarily true,” Notus said.

The lights dimmed and she looked around, wondering exactly what provided illumination. She didn't see any lamps or any braziers, for that matter, something she might expect to see in Notus's decorating scheme.

“We could have watched it,” Jessup said, and she swiveled her head to him. His pants were undone and hanging open now.

“Or we could have discussed it and have just waited for the right moment to put the plan into action.”

She watched as Notus pulled his pants down, freeing his already hard cock. A glance at Jessup showed that he, too, was naked.

Yes, this was definitely going to help her relax. Maybe she'd be able to come up with better ideas about what was happening.

She murmured in appreciation as the smell of cinnamon and cloves appeared out of nowhere. They were two of her favorite scents, and she glanced at Jessup, who gave her a seductive smile.

“You're overdressed.”

He must have decided that having her take off her own clothes would take too long. With one snap of his fingers, she was naked.

“Now, you're going to lie back, and we're going to do whatever we want with you.”

Regina giggled at Jessup's words. “I knew it! You were goading me with the talk of Istanbul, and I fell for it.” She snuggled down into the fluffy bedding and stretched her arms above her head as a cat would when it woke from a nap. “But that's okay. Do with me as you will.”

When neither man moved, she frowned. "What? Is this not acceptable to you? Most men would jump right on an open invitation like this."

"You think we lied." They both sniffled as if they were crying, and she bit back a laugh.

"I can see why the two of you ran together for so long. You're exactly alike." She could tell by the looks on their faces that she'd said the wrong thing. They both stiffened, and not in a good way. Within seconds they'd both relaxed, both of them putting a hand on her stomach and gently stroking.

"We didn't fib about Istanbul," they said in unison.

"Close your eyes."

Regina followed Jessup's command immediately, savoring the soft feel of the mattress under her. She would give Notus credit for having picked a wonderful bed for his new room. It felt as if she were sinking into a well of feathers, all of them tickling her, making her nerve endings come alive.

The wonderful smell permeating the room grew heavier, and she inhaled deeply, rolling her head just a little, relishing the anticipation of what was about to happen. She waited, wanting to open her eyes and see what they were doing. She didn't, though, not wanting to spoil the anticipation that ran through her.

Time passed slowly, and she tried not to think about how long it was taking. She could feel them beside her, their heat radiating from their bodies.

Regina wiggled a little, hoping for something, anything, from them. Even a reprimand for not being still would be better than the stillness she felt right now.

Finally, after what seemed an eternity, she said, "Jessup?"

"Have you ever meditated?"

She cracked open an eye to glance at Notus. "Meditated?"

"Yes, you need to relax your body to do that, center on yourself, allow everything around you to slip away. Now, close your eyes and gather your tension;

then slowly let it out, sending it to your fingers and toes, letting it flow out of your body.”

She bit back the urge to tell Notus he sounded like a New Age guru and she really didn't have time for meditation. A good, hard fuck would be better.

*“Play the game.”*

Jessup's voice was deep and commanding, and she inhaled sharply, then relaxed even farther into the bed. After a few long moments of silence, she did as Notus had said, letting her worries gather in the center of her body and then mentally sending them out through her limbs.

When she actually felt her arms and legs grow lighter, she sighed inwardly. It worked. The tension seeped out of her body, leaving her feeling weightless and calmer than she had in ages.

“Good girl,” they whispered in unison, and then there were hands on her feet and arms, fingers pressing against pressure points, massaging her into an even more extreme sense of relaxation.

Regina felt as if she might actually fall asleep as they worked her extremities, the sensation pure heaven.

She rolled her head from side to side, then sniffed. Something had been added to the already incredible smells in the room. What was it? Another deep inhale made her smile.

Coconut. She could feel it now, their warm, slippery hands spreading the hot oil up her legs and arms, over her breasts and stomach, down her thighs.

She wanted to ask them how this had anything to do with Istanbul, but she didn't want to interrupt their rhythm, each of them working one side of her body, their hands in perfect unison.

Regina licked her lips and sighed deeply when they each caressed a breast.

Her nipples tightened, the hard buds hungry for attention. The four hands ignored them, though, continuing to work her flesh until her body felt like jelly.

When they each finally grasped a nipple, gently rolling it between thumb and forefinger, she arched into them, her back and hips coming off the bed.

Each man put a hand on her shoulder and held it down as they continued to tease her nipples.

“Please, no more.”

“Shush.” Notus's voice was very soft. “You'll take what we give.”

“And wait for us to decide what comes next,” Jessup said.

The temptation to say “with pleasure” was on the tip of her tongue, but it vied for space with the words, “just fuck me, damn you!”

But talking would ruin the high she felt right now. Fingers trailed off her breasts, down her stomach, and to her thighs. The hardest part was keeping her eyes closed. She wanted to open them, see where they were, see if she could figure out what came next.

As she thought that, their hands moved to her mound. Fingers traced along her slit, one from each of them, opening her, probing her warm, swollen folds. She pulsed with need, arching her hips ever so slightly, the invitation plain.

They ignored it, though, both their hands spreading her wide, a finger trailing down her center, from top to bottom and back. The finger toyed with her clit, gently swirling it in a circle, the pressure light enough to send sensations of sheer bliss through her but not enough to make her climax.

“Oh, I...” A finger slipped inside her as others continued to work her swollen bud. A second finger slipped into her, and the pressure on her clit intensified. Her orgasm skyrocketed, soaring through her and making all the tension she'd lost seep back in but, in a wonderfully euphoric way, making her gasp and wiggle as they continued to stroke her and fill her.

A second orgasm loomed, but just as it started to spill over the fingers left her.

“No!” She made an ineffectual grab for hands, wanting nothing more than to put them back on her, feel them play with her and make her soar again.

But her lovers had other ideas. One of them was at her feet now, pushing her legs up until she felt as if she were folded in half. He held her feet to his chest, and she felt the top of him probe at her swollen entrance. He pushed her feet up more and slid into her, his cock moving all the way inside her before it slid back out.

He fucked her with slow, even strokes, the sensations cascading through her in wonderful ripples, the intensity of it making her quiver with each thrust. She opened her eyes and lost herself to the fervor, shivering when hands came down on her from above to caress her breasts and tweak her nipples ever so tenderly.

She opened her eyes to look up at Jessup, who gazed down at her, his expression soft as they stared into each other's eyes. A slight smile tinged his lips, and she returned it, gasping when Notus chose that moment to thrust even harder, sending her soaring over the edge again.

Lights flashed in front of her eyes, and the ecstasy intensified when Jessup leaned over and kissed her, his tongue taking over her mouth, sliding in and out to the rhythm of Notus's cock.

Goddess above, this was good, one of the most intense explosions of bliss she'd ever felt. Jessup nibbled at the sides of her mouth, his hands still caressing her breasts.

Notus thrust into her, his movements slow, her body still folded, her feet planted on his chest.

She loved being with the two of them. Their gentle lovemaking thrilled her. She hadn't expected this at all; she'd expected to be soundly fucked with hard, heavy thrusts that made her wonder if she would faint from the pleasure.

The slow fuck gave an intense, sweet pleasure, and it was a wonderful surprise, which she supposed had been the point. She closed her eyes and rocked with Notus as he thrust into her. She wiggled her toes against his chest, and he rewarded her by grasping her feet in his hands and tickling the undersides.

When she giggled he moved away from her, and she pushed herself up on her elbows. "Where are you...?"

“Shush.” Jessup leaned over and kissed her again as the two men shifted positions, her longtime lover sliding into her in one swift stroke. He placed her feet over his shoulders as he grasped her hips and started a relentless pace, the sound of their flesh slapping together filling the room.

Notus leaned over and kissed each nipple as Regina's body moved under Jessup's sweet assault. Notus sucked and licked her, took a nipple into his mouth and pulled it up as Jessup slid inside, then let it pop out of his mouth as Jessup left her body.

“Oh Goddess, yes.” She wiggled under the two men, loving every second of their touches, their hands, their lips.

When Notus slid over her, his cock near her mouth, she made an eager grab for it, crying out in need when he pulled away from her. His mouth, however, found her clit, and he licked and suckled the bud while Jessup fucked her.

While she enjoyed the attention of her two faeries, she wanted to play too. But every time she got her mouth near Notus, he moved, keeping her from tasting the hard cock that, from previous experience, she knew would taste delicious.

Why was he doing that? She stuck out her tongue, the tip of it just tasting the underside of Notus's cock before he once again moved it out of range.

“Damn it!” she screamed at him. “Give it to me.”

As if she'd opened some sort of magical floodgate, a stream of warm oil poured out from the ceiling, coating the bed and all its occupants. The stream continued to fall as Jessup left her body, and the men gathered her in their arms, stroking and playing with her, rubbing the oil into her body.

It had to be magically endowed, because everywhere it touched brought about sparks of pleasure, bright bursts of light popping from her skin and those of her lovers as they caressed.

Regina took a cock in each hand and slid her now slippery palms up and down them, the friction quickly turning hot as she ran from base to head and back again.



She could tell by the intensity of their breathing that both men were close to the edge.

She tightened her grip and increased her movements as Notus spread her lips and Jessup's fingers found her clit. The oil hit her most intimate folds, and she came instantly.

"Oh fuck!" Her body tightened as the pleasure rushed through her, seeming to grab on every inch of her body. She'd never felt anything like it before, and her lovers' cry of release let her know that they, too, had climaxed and experienced the same sort of intensity she felt.

Their cocks pulsed in her fists, and she leaned forward, they did the same so that she had a forehead leaning on either side of her head. She heard their heartbeats, felt the pulse of their blood as it flowed through her veins, something she'd done with Jessup but never with anyone else.

Was that who she felt now? Maybe it was just Jessup's reaction that coursed into her body. She closed her eyes and concentrated, feeling three distinct heartbeats, three distinct thought patterns.

She shouldn't be able to feel Notus this way. What was happening to her?

She jumped from the bed, not willing to stay there and see what exactly she felt.

"Regina?" Jessup glanced at her while Notus fell back on the bed, his hand on his stomach, which rose and fell sharply with his heavy breaths.

*"Come back to bed."*

She looked over to where Jessup lay. He patted the space between him and Notus, and she gave her head a little shake.

*"Don't overthink it."* A sensual smile lit up his face. *"You're with two dark faeries. Of course there's going to be a great amount of power. Don't attach things to it that don't belong there."*

*"You felt it. Don't tell me I'm the only one who did, because I know better. Plus, we can't just fuck and sleep. We need to go and search for the stone."* She hoped she didn't sound like a pathetic whiner, but something was happening and she wasn't really sure what it was.

She waited for him to answer, but he didn't. Beside him, Notus looked to be sleeping, his chest rising and falling in even breaths.

*"Come and sleep, pet. We'll do exactly what the bitch wants us to do, and maybe she'll let down her guard and we'll figure out a way to find the stone."*

She knew he was right, but it was so frustrating. She wanted to shift and run the halls, see if her senses could seek out the stone while most of the castle was either fucking or sleeping. *"Is that an order?"*

*"Most definitely."*

Arguing would do no good. She climbed in between them and snuggled down, sighing when they both turned into her, arms going round her, legs intertwined. Her body was sated and ready for sleep, but her mind wouldn't relax.

Long after she could hear their light snores, she lay awake, thinking they now had four more days, and she didn't even know where the stone was hidden.

\* \* \*

Matlyn walked the outline of the upside-down pentagram. She leaned down at the point and ran her fingers over the edge, making sure it was just right. It would have been better if she'd had different help drawing out the lines.

The witches working for her right now had power, but not as much as the three people who'd just fucked and practically lit up that wing of the castle. Using one of the dark faeries for the preparation would have been perfect. But Jessup couldn't be trusted, and asking Notus for help would alert Regina that Matlyn was up to something. That would do no good. The best thing right now was to take things slowly. In the end she would win.

“It won't be long, my darling Doc. I've missed you.” She closed her eyes and imagined Doc, dead at the hands of a triad member. “When you're back, we'll take great pleasure in making her suffer for what she did to you. She'll watch her lovers die before her. She'll feel the pain of their loss, just like I felt yours.”

“I have the perfect host for you, a new body that will entertain us both.” She glanced over at the bloodstone, which rested on a pedestal near the far wall. It had been Regina who had reminded her that one of the qualities of the bloodstone was its ability to make contact with the spirit world.

Doc had been very specific about what was to be done. With him around there was no way they would lose. He'd help her bring back Monk, and they'd rain down fire upon the witches, killing them all so that no opposition was left.

## Chapter Nine

Apples. Regina sniffed, and the rich, savory smell of cinnamon, sugar, and baked apples rushed into her, making her stomach grumble. She sat up, the sheet falling away as she glanced around for the two men who had kept her so warm during the cold night.

She could hear them talking, though, their voices low. Another look around showed a set of French doors that hadn't been there the night before. Just beyond it, on a stone balcony, sat Jessup and Notus. They were drinking and eating as if they didn't have a care in the world.

It didn't take a second for her to get up, bathe, and spell herself some clothes, and inch toward the doors. She listened, hoping to catch some glimpse into the men and their relationship. She wondered what had happened to break them apart, since they'd obviously been friends for a hundred years, at least.

But if she'd hoped to find some insight into them, she was disappointed. They were talking about Matlyn, the stones, and what they represented. A chill ran through her as she listened to Jessup calmly discuss how Doc, Matlyn's lover and coleader of Monk's acolytes, had died at the hands of a triad member.

Next, Jessup told Notus how Matlyn and her followers had killed the next triad to try to steal a stone. She smiled as the lies spilled from his lips, almost as if he were reading from a script.

"What about the last stone?" Notus sounded as if he were talking around a mouthful of food.

"Maybe they're afraid," Jessup replied. "No one has shown up to try and steal it. Which means they won't have what they need to fuel their spell, and Monk will be released on Samhain."

There was a moment's silence, and then she heard someone swallow.

"Does that worry you?"

"Should it?" Jessup's words spilled out quickly, and he sounded more than a little defensive.

"Of course." Notus's answer came just as fast.

"You don't sound very sure of that." There was the clink of a fork hitting a plate.

"Well, you know me. I don't do very well taking orders."

"Really? I never would have guessed it, Notus." There was a slight pause. "Which begs the question, what the fuck are you doing here?"

"You like that question, don't you?"

Regina smiled at the humor she heard in Notus's voice. "But let me turn it back around. You don't take orders any better than I do. So what the fuck are you doing here? Is the tiger holding you here, or is it something else entirely?"

The answer to this would be interesting, Regina thought, feeling just a little uneasy about eavesdropping on their conversation.

"My tiger would follow me wherever I went, and vice versa." There was no warning in Jessup's voice or taunting to let Notus know he couldn't have her. It was a simple statement of facts that made Regina feel very warm inside.

"I never thought you for a one-woman man."

"People change as they get older."

She heard the shifting of chairs and she worried they would come inside and find her spying on them. "But you never answered my question."

"Nor you mine. But we're wasting the morning away. Let's wake up the tiger and—"

"She's already awake and standing just outside the door."

Regina winced as Jessup's words reached her. She peeked around the corner and gave them a small wave.

"Naughty girl."

The tone of Jessup's voice promised a spanking, a promise she would love for him to keep.

"I heard you talking about me and of course I had to listen. You would have done the same." She sat down at the table and grabbed a slice of toast. "What's on the menu for today?"

"Well, I tried to talk Notus into letting us stuff him with bratwurst and beer until he passes out and then building a cuckoo clock around him, but he didn't really like that idea."

Regina tried not to choke on the piece of toast in her mouth. She chewed carefully, taking a small sip of tea before she swallowed. "Somehow I don't think that's what Matlyn has in mind."

Jessup responded with a shrug, and she grinned at him. "I care not what Matlyn wants."

"Really?" Notus sat forward, putting his elbows on the table. "That raises more questions than it answers. I thought she was the be-all, end-all around this place. If you don't care about her, why are you one of her followers?"

"He's just angry because Matlyn wants me for herself." She glanced at Notus, who was looking not at her but at Jessup.

"Cocky much?"

Notus didn't look at her as he spoke the words, but she knew they were meant for her.

"It's the truth." She took another bite of her toast. "So, what are we doing today?"

“Notus wants to visit Heidelberg.” Jessup took her hand and sucked her index finger into his mouth. “Or at least that's what he tells me. I think he'd be more than happy to just stay home and eat your pussy all day long.”

“Not totally true.” Notus's gaze was on her finger as it disappeared into Jessup's mouth and then reappeared before disappearing again. He selected a peach and bit into it, the juices running down his chin as he swallowed. “I'd like to play with her mouth, her ass, and her cunt. All three intrigue me. I'll let you watch if you want, Jessup. You used to enjoy that particular activity.”

Was it her imagination, or did Jessup suck her finger harder? Their gazes locked as he nibbled on her, the feeling sensual and sweet at the same time. Maybe he did enjoy the idea of watching her with Notus. His tongue licked from tip to palm, and she shivered in delight, her nipples hardening and her pussy tightening in need.

“As much as I'd love to stay here and watch you eat her up, I want to visit the Pagan's Hole,” Notus said. She tore her gaze away from Jessup and looked at Notus. He took another bite of his peach, ran his tongue over the hole in the flesh, and flicked at the edges. Her pussy pulsed as he licked once more. At this rate they wouldn't make it out of the castle, no matter what any of them wanted to do.

“The what?”

“It's in Heidelberg, along the Philosophenweg.”

“The what?” She tried to pull her finger away from Jessup, but he held tight, nibbling a little harder. She wanted to tell Notus that yes, they should forget their trip and just stay there.

“The Philosophenweg.”

Notus continued to eat his peach, the juices still dripping from his mouth. She thought about Jessup's comment earlier, about how Notus would like nothing more than to spend the day eating her pussy. She shivered, then shook her head. She'd already wasted too much time doing exactly what Matlyn wanted her to do. There

had to be a way to dump Notus off on someone else and see if she could spend the day trying to find the stone.

"You know the main things I remember about the Philosophenweg," Jessup said after he'd taken her finger out of his mouth. "It's a very popular tourist site. There's always lots of people hiking the trail and visiting the various attractions there. You never know who you might run into."

His meaning was very clear. The triad would not be able to find their way into the castle to talk with her, but they would be able to come to her at a tourist site. Why the hell hadn't she thought about that before?

Things suddenly looked a whole lot brighter. Once she located the triad, they would be able to find the bloodstone in no time flat.

"So, who's going to tell me exactly what this Philosowhatever is?"

"We'll tell you on the trail," Notus said. "It's quite a hike, and we'll need something to talk about that will take our minds off sex."

"After we take our walk, we can eat at a little café near the square that has amazing strudel." Jessup turned her hand over and kissed her palm.

"That sounds good." Notus flicked his peach pit into the air, and it disappeared. "Let's just make it clear, though, that I won't be letting anyone build a clock around me today."

"There's always tomorrow." Jessup put out a finger and traced it up Regina's arm. "We have to look for just the right place to perform that little operation. Otherwise you might come back too quickly."

Notus snorted out a laugh, and Regina joined him. She wondered if they'd always traded banter this way, or if this was in some way an undercurrent of tension that still existed between them. She made a mental note to once again ask Jessup what had happened between them.



"I'll leave a trail of breadcrumbs wherever we may go," Notus said as he stood. "You can't lose me that easily. So let's be off. I'm more than ready to explore this fascinating country."

"Which you've seen thousands of times." Jessup stood and took Regina's hand, helping her to stand. "I'm sure it took you quite a bit to think of someplace you've never been before."

"Actually, it's the oracle at the Pagan's Hole that I'm looking forward to."

Notus wiggled his eyebrows, and before Regina could ask what he meant, the air grew thin. Regina grasped Jessup's arms as they disappeared. He kissed her deeply as they traveled, his tongue finding a place inside her mouth that made her shiver with pleasure.

She wanted him to keep them suspended in air forever, their arms locked around each other, their lips and tongues entwined. To make things better he could bury his hard cock deep inside her wetness. She felt a chuckle form deep inside his chest, making her shiver yet again as they popped into an alleyway.

Her back rested against a brick wall, and despite the discomfort, she moaned as his hand slipped into her panties, his fingers finding her clit and squeezing hard. She came with a jolt, squeezing her eyes shut and barely holding back a scream.

When she opened them, she gasped, shocked to find Notus's face right next to hers, a look of pure need written all over him.

"You could have let me play too. It's exquisite to watch you come, Regina. Your face is quite expressive when you climax." She could feel Notus's hot breath on her cheek as he spoke.

Heat soared through her, and she tried to keep focused on the day. She needed to search for a triad, not think about being fucked by two dark faeries. She tried to push away from Jessup, who lifted her hands over her head and held them close. Notus's fingers slipped inside her jeans, finding her throbbing clit and circling it ever so lightly.

"Stop that," she whispered. A second climax threatened to burst forth as Notus's fingers expertly played with her sensitive flesh.

She fought back a scream as she rocked on his hand, and she wished Jessup would turn her to the wall, spell away her clothes, and jam his cock into her. Hell, it didn't have to be Jessup. If he wanted to watch as much as she thought he did, it could be Notus who fucked her, or both of them, one after the other.

Notus's fingers traced down her slit, and she lifted up just enough for him to slide two inside her as his thumb pressed her clit into her folds, circling around it as he thrust into her. Jessup held her firmly, his gaze intent on her as Notus continued to explore.

"Jessup! Damn you, fuck me." She rocked faster, ecstasy spreading through her.

They let go of her simultaneously. "No." The word came out of their mouths in unison, and Notus closed his eyes as he licked her juices off his index finger.

"Delicious," Notus said, his hand tracing the outline of his hard cock.

She reached out her hands, trying to grab one or both of them. They sidestepped her and then headed out of the alley, leaving her behind.

"Bastards!" She started after them, listening to them argue about cuckoo clocks and bratwurst as they stepped out into the street. She wanted to slap the both of them; then she stopped. If Jessup were entertaining Notus, then she would be able to keep an eye out for possible triad members who would, hopefully, be searching her out too.

*"Now you're catching on."* Jessup turned and gave her wink.

She heard Jessup say something about Notus's head being hard as wood as she scanned the street, putting out magical feelers, trying to tap into the line she'd always used to contact the elders. There was not a single inkling of an answer, and she told herself not to get discouraged. After all, they had the entire day to explore. Surely sometime during the day she would be able to find something, anything that would help her.

“Regina, are you listening to me?”

She turned her attention to Notus, who studied her carefully. He looked devastatingly handsome in his black jeans and black long-sleeved T-shirt, his hair hanging down to his ass. She noticed more than a few women glancing his way. Of course, they were also looking at Jessup, who wore tan slacks and a dark green button-down, his hair tied at his nape.

“What were you saying?”

“You asked about the Philosophenweg. As you know, Heidelberg is a university town. Over the years teachers, students, writers, composers, and many others have used this trail for inspiration. The Pagan's Hole is an oracle where, I've heard, people go to get answers to their questions.”

Regina glanced around at the steep path. She closed her eyes and breathed in the deep, wonderful smell of flowers and foliage filling her senses. The path was lined with flora of various colors, and off in the distance was an absolutely beautiful view of Heidelberg and its famous castle. It was a stark reminder that, if Matlyn got her way and Regina failed, all this would be lost. Maybe the oracle would tell her who the triad was.

“Regina.” Jessup held out his hand. “Come and take a look at a few of these markers. They have information about poets and their wonderful viewpoint on life and love.”

His message couldn't have been any clearer. Keep yourself from sliding into despair. It won't do any good. How was it the dark faerie had a better outlook on things than she did? She hurried up the incline, stopping to take a breath. She was not in as good shape as she thought, even after yesterday's run through the forest. The walk was taxing, but that didn't stop it from being very popular. Tourists crowded the area, some with children on their shoulders, some stopping to kiss or take photos of the vista.

Regina hurried to her companions, and they made a space in between them. The path was narrow, and at times they had to stop and let people pass or let people coming down go by.

Each time they passed someone, Regina would reach out with her magic, hoping that person would respond and pull her aside, tell her that they were part of the triad and all she needed to do was sneak them into the castle and they'd take care of the rest.

After an hour of climbing, stopping to look over the scenery, and climbing again, she came up with nothing. She sat down on a rock perched on the side of the overhang. Heidelberg lay below them.

"You seem pensive today."

Notus sat down right beside her, his thigh brushing against hers. A spark of awareness spread through her, and she thought about his hands buried in her most intimate of places, of how he'd made her feel. She couldn't tell him the truth, so she needed to lie to him, something she'd become very adept at doing since she'd been working undercover.

"I'm curious about you and Jessup. You seem so different, yet you obviously were very close at one point. I'm also very interested in what broke the two of you apart."

The faerie winked at her, and she glanced over at Jessup, who had crossed his arms over his chest and watched them. He didn't seem angry, and he made no move to stop Notus from answering her questions.

"At one point Jessup and I were like twins, traveling to all corners of the earth, enjoying the ladies and raising all sorts of trouble. Then, about fifty years ago, he just grew too old. It's a shame, really. We had great fun raising hell together."

"So your idea of fun is causing mayhem?" She hoped she didn't sound like a prude.

"I am named after a god that was known for causing storms."

"You seem very proud of that." She stood up and walked a little up the path. "Just because you bear his name doesn't mean you need to induce problems for people."

"But I would hate to disappoint my father," Notus replied with a grin. "It's why he gave me the name, so that I might follow in the great god's footsteps."

Jessup released a snort of derision, and Regina smiled.

"He should be proud of you, then, for the role you're taking to bring about the end of mankind."

Jessup's voice was devoid of emotion, but Regina could tell by the way his fists were clenched that it took all his strength not to send that fist flying into Notus's face.

"Don't act as if you're not working toward the same goal."

Notus bent down to pick a flower. He offered it to Regina, but she refused to take it. After a few moments he sniffed it, then bounced it on his palm. Within seconds it was behind her ear, the sweet scent of it filling her nostrils.

"Mankind won't be destroyed. They'll just have a different function after we gain control."

Regina's stomach roiled. "Is that what you think?" She clamped her mouth shut, wishing she could take the words back. If she weren't careful, she would give away her true feelings.

"Isn't that what you think?"

"Of course," Jessup supplied, stepping up behind her. "But Regina doesn't like your use of the word *we*. After all, you've just arrived, and the rest of us have been working on this for years now."

"*Thank you, darling.*" She sent the words to him, and he leaned over and pinched her nipple, his message clear: watch yourself, tiger.

Notus spelled himself a bench, then sat down in the middle. He leaned back, stretching his arms across the back. "I think the three of us need to have a

discussion. This isn't the first time that I feel you and Matlyn aren't, shall we say, on the same page. She's demoted you, in a sense. Do you want to tell me why that is?"

The question pushed them out into dangerous waters, and Regina waited for Jessup to take the lead.

"It's all about sex," Jessup said, threading his fingers through Regina's hair. "Matlyn is angry because Regina and I love each other. Don't pretend you don't know that. I'm sure she talked to you about it."

The wind picked up, and leaves swirled in the air. Darkness seemed to spread out from the bench where Notus sat, and Regina half expected to see lightning fly from his fingers.

"There's more to it than that," Notus finally replied. "She didn't pick me out of a hat, you know."

"Which once again brings up the subject of your former relationship," Regina said. She pressed herself against Jessup, hoping that he would know that, no matter what Notus said, it would not change the way she felt about him.

Notus opened his mouth, closed it, then opened it again. "Why don't you ask him about what happened?"

"I'd rather see if you'll tell her the truth or if you'll lie to her."

Notus stood and moved until he and Jessup were face to face. "Lying can serve a purpose at some times, but not right now. Let's see if our memories match or if you've romanticized yourself to serve your own purposes."

Regina looked around. People were giving them strange looks as the two dark faeries stood nose to nose, their anger almost visible. If she didn't do something quick, the tension would escalate, and things could get really ugly.

"You two are attracting too much attention," she said, keeping her voice soft. She stepped in between them, fixing them both with a sultry gaze. "If talking about

your past is going to cause problems, we need to forget it. Let's just continue on to the Pagan's Hole, shall we?"

She moved off without waiting for an answer, praying to the Goddess she'd made the right move. If fists started to fly or, worse yet, magic came into play, the day could turn more than ugly.

The men fell into step behind her, arguing about something, their tones not nearly as edgy as they had been just seconds ago. Regina tuned them out as they climbed and once again tried to reach out for a triad member. When she felt nothing, she thought about the vision the elder had shown her yesterday. She'd not been able to make heads or tails out of it, not even with Jessup's help.

Why were they tossing the stone around? The bloodstone was sacred, a stone of great power that provided power and courage to those who believed in it. Yet the two men in the vision were treating it like an American football, using it for enjoyment.

What the hell did that mean?

She went over everything she knew about the bloodstone. In addition to its propensity for giving off courage and power, it was said to be a healing stone, used as far back as ancient Egyptian times. It could help people win court battles and help them make boatloads of money.

The elders had chosen it for its part in the pentagram, though, for its ability to banish evil. Too bad she couldn't use its power to banish Matlyn, perhaps to some other realm where an evil troll would make her his love slave.

Giggles from a group of teenage girls caught her attention. The girls were tittering behind their hands, the gazes locked somewhere behind Regina. She turned to see Notus and Jessup picking up small stones and acorns from the trail. They were throwing them at each other, dodging and waving and actually laughing. Their pockets started to fill, and she knew they were magically arming themselves with weapons to use in their little battle.

“Stop it!” She took a step toward them, then stopped suddenly, her eyes widening. The stones in their hands were green with red veins running through them. They were bloodstones.

“Oh holy shit.” She gasped as she realized she’d spoken the words out loud. “No, it can’t be. I’m not a... By the Goddess, how could this happen?”

The more they threw stones, the more their pockets bulged with more ammunition.

“I don’t have to search for the triad.” She walked back to the bench and sat down. “I’m part of it.”



## Chapter Ten

Jessup stopped throwing stones immediately, a cry of anger escaping his lips as he turned to her. Her thoughts ran into his mind, but he couldn't—no, he wouldn't—believe it. He'd helped her with the garnet because he loved her, but being part of a triad that included Notus was not on the agenda.

*“No! Put it out of your mind. It's not true. I won't do it.”*

*“We don't have a choice. The stone chooses its protectors, not the other way around.”* She sent him the vision the elder had given her, a vision that exactly matched the scene that had just taken place.

Air whooshed out of his lungs, and he felt as if he might topple over.

*“I refuse to believe it, no matter what sort of vision the elder sent you.”*

*“Jessup, if—”*

*“Listen to me, Regina, and listen carefully. Notus cannot be trusted. He will not help us recover the bloodstone. He will not do anything unless there is something in it for him.”*

Notus stood next to him now, hefting a stone in his hands. Jessup focused on Notus's hand. The rock he held was indeed a bloodstone. He felt as if his stomach had dropped to the ground and would never come back.

“Do you give up, my old friend?” Notus laughed at him. “Or are the two of you having the magical version of phone sex? If you are, you're doing it wrong, because both of you look like you're going to throw up.”

“Shut the fuck up.” Jessup winced at the sound of his voice. He turned to Notus, who stared at him in shock.

"I didn't tell her anything, I swear. If you're worried about me giving you up, I promise you it won't happen."

"Giving me up? Your memory is as faulty as your promises. What happened was your fault, not mine." *"The elders would never pick someone like him to protect the stone. He can't be trusted!"*

*"I told you, the stone chooses its own protectors. Obviously it knows great power will be needed and that the two of you possess it."*

He wasn't sure how to answer that. Was this why the elders hadn't told her who would come for the bloodstone, because they knew it would be unbelievable? Giving her a stupid vision, one that could be...

*"This could be a trick, you know. Matlyn could have known you were waiting for an elder and sent someone to plant a fake vision. She's powerful enough to do it."*

*"So now you think she does know I've been working against her? Just yesterday you told me there was no way she knew, that she was just angry because I wasn't eating her pussy anymore."*

"I hate to disrupt whatever is happening between the two of you, but I feel like a third wheel here, since I've now been left out of the conversation. I thought we were going to go to the Pagan's Hole and explore a little."

"I'm sorry, Notus." Regina had stepped up to them. "It's my fault. We're discussing an old argument that I brought up. Forgive us."

*"Such a smooth liar."* Jessup gave her a smile that he didn't feel. *"This discussion is not over. We need to talk when he's not around and trying to eavesdrop. I'll convince you it's a mistake."*

*"The stone doesn't make mistakes."*

Her thoughts were full of conviction, and Jessup watched her fall into step with Notus, heading up the hill. He knew they were close to the Pagan's Hole, which he'd heard about but never seen. Maybe the oracle could answer the question

of the triad, not that he'd ever believed in oracles. He'd been to several during his lifetime and he'd never had one answer a question for him.

Matlyn had a hand in this; he had no doubt. She'd called in Notus simply so she could plant this idea in Regina's mind, and Regina was so worried about finding the triad that she was willing to grab on to any idea.

Jessup could see the stone selecting Regina, even the two of them. But Notus? There was no way he could be included in something so important. How in the hell could the stone have chosen him?

Obviously Matlyn has bewitched it somehow.

*"Jessup, that's not possible. The stone is too powerful for that. Please, let's just leave this for now, and we'll discuss it later."*

They were at the top of the hill now, and he noticed a crowd of people gathered around something near the center. "There's your Pagan's Hole, Notus. Go and ask it your questions; see if it tells you anything that might be useful to you."

"I shall." Notus leaned over and kissed Regina on the cheek. "You two talk among yourselves, not that you haven't been doing that for the last ten minutes."

He strolled off toward the crowd, and Jessup turned to Regina.

"I say once again, the stone has made a mistake. I am not a member of the triad, and neither are you or Notus."

"We are, and the sooner you realize it, the sooner we'll be able to find the stone and rescue it."

He put his fingers on the bridge of his nose and squeezed slightly. His head had started to pound, and this discussion wasn't making it any better.

"Listen, Regina, as the stone's protector, wouldn't you have been able to feel it last night?"

"I sensed that it was gone from Matlyn's room."

“Yes, but you couldn't locate it, could you? If you were a protector, it would have called to you.” When she shook her head, he held up a finger. “You know I'm telling you the truth. Your vision is wrong.”

He wanted her to say that he was right, that she would forget this nonsense and go about trying to locate the real triad.

“I'm not sure how to convince you, but I will.” She took his hand and squeezed it. “As long as we get the stone before Samhain, we'll be fine.”

She walked away before he could respond. Even when he was angry, he couldn't take his gaze off her lush bottom. She drew even with Notus, putting her hand on his arm, and Jessup felt a small jolt of lust.

That wasn't what he should be feeling. He should be jealous; even if the three of them had already played in bed, he didn't want her touching him like that, in such an obviously intimate manner.

She gazed up at Notus, and the smile he gave her fueled Jessup's lust even more. Damn the elders to hell. No, wait, damn the stone to hell. This wasn't what he'd signed on for, but he supposed he'd have to see it through.

As long as they worked together to recover the stone, who said they had to stay together after it was all over?

\* \* \*

“You're lost in your own little world.”

Regina tapped her toe against Notus's boot and he looked under the table and then looked back up and gave her a wink.

They were sitting at an outdoor table at a café alongside the Neckar River. The smell of savory food tickled his senses, as did the beautiful woman sitting across from him.

“Do we want to play footsie while the big guy is off getting us beer?” He wiggled his foot back at her. “I'm all for that.”

Damn but this woman was sexy. She could even make him forget his argument with Jessup, and the stupid thing that had started it all those years ago. How was it that after fifty-three years they both still carried the scars of something that should have been talked over and forgotten?

*Because, little moron, fifty-three years ago you never would have done it. There's truth in the saying about age bringing wisdom and maturity.*

"Tell me again why we went to the Pagan's Hole today."

"Because Notus is gullible," Jessup said as he placed beer steins in front of them all. "It's nothing more than an old well, left around from Roman times."

"I'm not sure I believe that." Notus ran his finger up the handle of his mug. "Some say it's a pathway to the devil. Others say the great oracle that lives there will provide you with answers to all your problems."

"What problem did you ask for help with?"

Jessup gave him the evil eye, and Notus narrowed his eyes. They were definitely going to have a talk.

"I told her I had a pain in my ass I needed to get rid of." Notus gave him a sweet grin. "She suggested lancing it, like you would a boil."

"I'll give you a pain *on* the ass, one that, as I've already told Regina, you love."

"Boys, stop bickering. Whatever happened, happened a long time ago. Just leave it in the past. If you continue to ruin my day with your fighting, I'm going to have to demand some sort of medicine from the two of you to soothe my nerves."

She put the back of her hand to her forehead and acted like she was going to faint. Notus grinned, looking over at Jessup, who was doing the same thing, his gaze locked on the beautiful tiger. It was easy to see the love that passed between the two of them, and Notus was surprised that he didn't really feel jealous. What he wanted was to be part of it, to have someone look at him the way the two of them looked at each other.

As he thought about it, he guessed that was jealousy, in a way. Except he really didn't want to break them apart, not after seeing them together. Of course that was exactly what Matlyn had wanted him to do. If he was doing what she'd summoned him for, if he were trying to live up to his name, he would be seducing the little tiger and leaving Jessup in the dust.

Although after witnessing the way they looked at each other, he knew it wouldn't be an easy thing to do.

He wondered why Matlyn wanted it done right now, when really she should be concentrating on the stones and her plan to resurrect Monk. The thought reinforced the idea that he was being used, but to what end?

These two were obviously her faithful servants, doing exactly what she'd asked them to do by basically babysitting him.

"He's not even listening to me, Jessup. That hurts my feelings."

"Maybe he needs a spanking. I don't like it when someone hurts Regina's feelings."

Notus looked at Jessup, then back at Regina. Whereas earlier Jessup had been angry, he now sounded playful. The two of them were eating strudel and looking at him between bites. He looked down and discovered a plate of pastry in front of him. When had that appeared, and how long had he been woolgathering?

"Can I at least eat my food first?"

"I'm not sure." Regina purred, the throaty cat sound making his cock swell. "Perhaps we should send you to bed without any supper. But then again, it's too early for bed."

"Too early to sleep maybe." Jessup taunted him with a smile. "Of course you don't have to have a bed to do what Regina has on her mind. The purr gives it away. She wants to fuck."

Notus sat up a little straighter. "You mean she wants to fuck me. A scrumptious thought."

“Not just you.”

When Jessup ran a hand over the swell of Regina's breast, Notus thought his cock would jump out of his pants. Her deep moan of satisfaction hit him in the center of his body and spread out, encompassing every part of him, something that hadn't happened in a very long time.

He always thought with his cock, and it had never failed him before. But right now other parts of his body were coming into play. He wondered what it would be like to be with the tiger for an extended period of time, enjoying everything she had to offer, including her brains and magical talent. He was pretty sure this wasn't a good thing. Perhaps he did need a good, hard spanking to put his mind back where it belonged, on the physical side of things.

Having Jessup spank him while Regina watched would be thrilling. Something told him she would enjoy it as much as he did, and he knew from past experiences that Jessup enjoyed wielding a belt.

In fact, in the years since he and Jessup had parted, he hadn't found anyone who gave him as good a spanking as his old friend had. To experience it again and to have Regina watch would make his cock swell, and then...

“Perhaps we should go back to the castle,” Notus said. “Or find someplace a little more private to continue this conversation.”

“An excellent idea,” Jessup said, then leaned over to kiss Regina. “Tell me, Notus, do you still prefer I use a belt on your ass, or would you like something harsher?”

“I love the taste of leather.” Notus palmed his cock, shifting it slightly. A soft moan caught his attention, and he glanced at Regina, his eyes widening. The little minx was playing with her clit, if he wasn't mistaken.

Her breath came in short, soft gasps, and her hand moved ever so slightly. Jessup's eyes were focused down, his tongue snaking out to lick his lips as he watched. Yes, she was definitely getting herself off.

“Do you like the idea of watching him spank me?”

“Very much so.” Her breath caught, and then she closed her eyes, her enjoyment evident.

“Let's just hope he remembers how to give me the proper licks. I'm a fan of a hard spanking that will leave my ass nice and red. I can almost taste it now.”

“Oh yes.”

She squeezed her eyes tighter and grasped the tablecloth. Yes, she was definitely coming. He watched the pleasure spread through her.

“Good girl,” he said, keeping his voice low. “Maybe if you'd been naughty, you could get spanked, too.”

Notus motioned for the check, shocked when a small witch approached the table.

“Matlyn requests the pleasure of your company at dinner in one hour.”

“That's not much notice,” Jessup said, standing. He offered money to their server, then turned back to the witch. “Tell her we decline her offer.”

“No!” Regina stood, and Notus tried to read the emotion on her face. Her voice had just a trace of panic, as if she were afraid of upsetting their boss. “We'll be there.”

“But I thought we had other plans,” Notus said, casually picking up his mug. “Perhaps Matlyn would accept the pleasure of our company tomorrow. That would suit us better.”

“I agree,” Jessup said, turning to the witch. “Tell her we'll—”

“Be there in an hour,” Regina interrupted. “It will give us time to change.”

The witch nodded in her direction, then walked toward the entrance of the café.

“Why did you do that?”

Jessup's voice was tight, and Notus could tell his old friend hadn't changed the way he showed his displeasure. He might be mad, but he was always in control.

“Because she's the boss.” Regina gave him a look that Notus couldn't decipher.



“It'll take an hour,” Notus said, shrugging. “My spanking can wait for a while. As a matter of fact, thinking about it during dinner will build the tension and make me want it even more.”

For a minute he thought Jessup would say no. Then the older man shrugged, and Notus thought for the first time that he might have mellowed over time. In the past Jessup would have fought for what he wanted. Perhaps the tiger had tamed him.

“Not tamed,” Jessup said, turning to Notus. “When you're in love, you learn there's more to life than what you want. You learn that making your lover happy makes you happy, as well.”

Regina stood and turned Jessup's face toward hers. She kissed him deeply; their mouths merged in a sweet tango that made Notus want to jump into the middle, feel the heat of her kiss transferred to him.

Yes, they were definitely in love.

## Chapter Eleven

Regina stepped into Matlyn's room, surprised to find the evil wannabe queen of the world sitting by herself. It wasn't like her to not have others around, waiting to do her bidding and stroke her ego.

"Hello, my tiger. How have you enjoyed your new friend? Is his cock impressive?"

Regina took a seat at the table and plucked a plum from a basket. "As a matter of fact, yes. It's not as remarkable as Jessup's dick, but it's not too bad. He has a name for it, but I've yet to discover it. But I will in a few days."

Matlyn's laugh made Regina want to shift to tiger form and tear her eyes out. But that couldn't happen. There was no telling what sort of protections Matlyn had placed on herself and how they'd affect someone who tried to kill her.

Plus the elders, despite their overly quiet demeanor of late, had insisted that things follow the course. "*If we take care of Monk, Matlyn will disappear,*" they'd told her. Regina was pretty sure, though, that they were worried what would happen if Matlyn were killed.

They'd been unhappy when Doc had been killed during the recovery of the amethyst. Matlyn had retaliated by killing dozens of witches, almost in one fell swoop. She was pretty sure the same thing would happen if Matlyn died, although there wasn't another clear leader in mind for the group. That didn't mean the witch hadn't left magical traps in place to be set off in case of her death.

Better the devil you know than the one you don't, she thought. She was sure the elders felt the same.

“When you find out the name, I want to know. Promise me you'll tell me, Regina.”

“Of course I'll share the information with you.” Regina pasted a seductive smile on her face, trying to focus her thoughts on the woman in front of her. She prayed the evening wouldn't end in sex, at least not sex that included Matlyn.

What she wanted most was to watch Jessup spank Notus and then have the two of them fuck her into oblivion.

As if they could read her thoughts, the two men appeared, one sitting on either side of her. They sat with their hands folded in their laps, their faces expressionless.

“We're here,” Jessup said finally. “Let's eat and get this over with. We have no desire to spend any more time with you than we have to, Matlyn.”

Regina gripped her hands into fists. Why was he deliberately trying to antagonize her? They'd discussed it earlier, after arriving home from Heidelberg. They'd agreed the best thing to do was be gracious and polite and laugh with her, making her think things were fine and they'd accepted their new friend with no problem.

Yet the first thing he'd done was piss her off. Matlyn sneered at him and then turned to Notus.

“Surely he doesn't speak for everyone.”

She had that silky, I-always-get-what-I-want tone to her voice now. Regina had heard it many times in the past, and she knew if Matlyn didn't get her way, things wouldn't be pretty.

“Actually, he does.” Notus fixed her with a dry stare. “We were rather enjoying ourselves before your little summons, and we had some fun plans for the evening. It's too bad you ruined them.”

Shit! The two of them were doing it now. She sent a small burst of power toward them, angry when they both ignored what had to be a painful jolt.

*“Stop it!”*

"No."

Jessup's answer enraged her.

*"Notus and I talked it over, and we decided Matlyn doesn't get to call the shots tonight."*

*"Oh, the two of you discussed it, did you? Well fuck you very much for including me in that chat. When we get back to the room, if we get back to the room, I'm in charge."*

"We'll see who's in charge."

"Why you little—" Regina clamped her mouth shut, fighting to keep her anger inside her.

"Problems?" Matlyn reached for a glass of wine. "Are the two of you fighting? Regina led me to believe everything was fine. Did you lie to me, my tiger?"

"Yes, she did." Regina gasped as Notus joined the conversation. "Jessup and I have never been very thrilled with each other, and being forced to—interact—has not been pleasant for us."

"Idiots." So much for a quiet dinner, then fucking.

"Oh now, let's not fight. We have four days until our master returns, and we want him to find us as one unit, willing to serve him and fulfill his every wish. That means the three of you need to learn to play nice. That is a command."

"Of course, Matlyn." Regina kept her voice low and submissive.

"We'll see," Jessup said, shooting an angry look at Notus. What the hell had happened in the ten minutes between when she'd left them in Notus's room and they'd arrived here? Had what happened between them in the past come back to rear its ugly head? She'd told them it didn't matter anymore, that they needed to forget it, but could they do that? Was that what had made the two of them act like children?

“Stop acting like such dicks. I'm sick of the two of you arguing with each other. You did it this afternoon, and now you're ruining the evening. What the fuck is wrong with you?”

Both men shrugged as if they hadn't heard her, and Regina shot another bolt of energy their way. They both dodged it and laughed. She turned to Matlyn, who stared at them all in disgust.

“Such a shame.” Matlyn whirled the stem of her glass between her fingers. “I had hoped for a nice dinner. I have bloodred steaks, salmon, and lobster, which I know the tiger loves. Then, I thought the four of us might participate in a little bed play. But if the two of you are going to spoil it, I'll go and look for fun elsewhere.”

The food disappeared, as did the table. Then Matlyn stood and walked toward the bed. “I'll kindly ask the three of you to leave. I don't care what you do, as long as it's not in my presence.”

Regina, seething with anger, bolted from her chair, then stalked toward the door. Behind her she heard the sound of two distinct sets of footprints, both of them heavy as if the men were stomping their feet as they walked.

She slammed open the door and raced out into the hallway, whirling to face them when she came to a hallway intersection.

“Listen, I don't give a damn what is up with you two. We agreed that...” She stopped talking as she faced them. Both of them were grinning, their laughter barely contained. Then they offered each other a hand, shaking and clapping each other on the shoulder as if they'd just won a lottery worth millions of dollars.

“Excuse me, but what's going on?”

Jessup turned to her, giving her a sweet kiss. “Neither of us wanted to spend time with Matlyn, and, well, we thought the best way to get out of it might be to go in there and act like assholes. And it worked.”

“You could have let me in on it.”

“No, your reaction was vital,” Notus said. “And it was perfect.”

"Perfect or not, the two of you belong to me tonight. I'm in charge of the rest of the evening, and if you don't like it you can kiss my ass."

"With pleasure," they said in unison.

"And we'll kiss anything else you want, too," Notus said, the suggestion in his voice very obvious.

She whirled around, aiming to stalk down the hallway that lay in front of her. It didn't lead to Notus's room, but it would give her a minute or two to calm down. She'd only taken one step when she slammed into an invisible wall. She fell backward and landed flat on her ass.

"Son of a bitch," she whispered, looking up. Footsteps raced toward her, and when Jessup leaned down and stroked her cheek, she touched his hand.

"Are you all right? I didn't think we had that much beer for you to lose your balance." There was humor in Jessup's words, but the concern on his face made her flush.

"There's a—" She stopped talking as Notus walked down the hallway she'd just tried to enter. "Something stopped me. I..."

Jessup grabbed her hand and pulled her up. She put out a free hand, which met something very solid. But how could that be, when Notus had obviously had no trouble walking where she couldn't. What the hell was that all about?

"Can you go down there, Jessup?"

"Regina? What's wrong?"

*"Just go toward Notus! Please!"* She prayed that he wouldn't question her anymore. He frowned, then took one tentative step; when he met no resistance he took another, and then another before walking the full length of the hallway, which ended in a round turret.

"Sweetheart, there's nothing here."

"There is!" She put out her hand and fell forward when she met no impediment.

“What the hell?” She did a full three-hundred-and-sixty-degree turn, taking in the bricks on the wall. There were no doorways except the one at the end. As she took another step, a surge of power soared through her.

She gasped and staggered backward. “It's here.”

“You know, this is the only place in this castle I've felt any sort of power,” Notus said as he walked up. “I thought about it my first night here, how there seemed to be so little of it, despite the fact Matlyn had told me she'd gathered the most powerful of her kind to help with the ceremony.”

Regina tossed a look at Jessup, who was looking at the far wall as if examining every brick.

*“You feel it?”*

*“Yes, I do. It's here.”*

She swallowed hard, trying not to give off any obvious signs of celebration. They'd found the stone, and things were going to be just fine. Now all she had to do was find the right way to bring this all up to Notus, to tell him that she needed his help, and it would probably go against everything he'd ever thought he would do. She had to approach it just right. Maybe after a night of play he would listen to her.

“Darling.”

She looked at Jessup, who gave her a solemn nod.

“You go back to Notus's room. He and I will try to find out the cause of your fall.”

She thought to argue, but then decided she needed a minute to think about what this could mean. She nodded, then turned toward the hallway, and made it through the entryway with no problem.

She ran down the hall, then stepped into Notus's room, fighting hard to control her laughter.

She knew exactly where the stone was hidden, and there was a triad to rescue it, one that featured her and two dark faeries; her dark faeries, two strong men

who, hopefully after tonight, would do anything she asked. She knew Jessup would, and she was pretty sure after the discussion they'd had at dinner that Notus would do it too.

She didn't care that they weren't the "in love and can't keep their hands off each other" type of triad. Well, maybe "they can't keep their hands off each other" part was true. But they weren't a triad in the sense that they would spend the rest of their lives together.

Once the stone was in place, she was sure Notus would disappear, going about his business of carousing and spreading chaos. He wasn't the type of man who would settle down. She wasn't sure how she felt about that. They'd had a lot of fun tonight. Having him around on a full-time basis could be interesting. Or maybe he'd come back and visit from time to time, although she wasn't sure how Jessup felt about that. She'd yet to find out what had happened between them, and she wondered if she ever would.

Right now that didn't matter, though. What mattered was the stone. By this time tomorrow she would have it in her hot little hand, and her lovers would transport the three of them to England where the elders would perform the ceremony and Monk would cease to exist.

Maybe, as a bonus, they would dispatch a team that would actually be able to take care of Matlyn, and all would be right with the world.

As if they knew she was thinking about them, the two men in question appeared before her. They didn't look very happy, but that was about to change.

"Darling, I think you slipped on something," Jessup said. "There is no barrier in the place where you fell."

"We searched with our hands and with our senses. There was nothing there." Notus lay down on the bed and patted it. "Now, let's fuck."

"I don't think so." She crossed her arms over her chest in mock anger. "I told you that I'm not happy with the way things went tonight, and I meant it. I'm in charge, and what I really want is—a floor show."



“Excuse me?” Jessup moved right next to her, towering above her. She savored his heat and the deep arousal that he felt. It made her nipples hard and her labia swell and dampen.

“You heard me. I want to see the two of you perform for me. Which means I want to see the two of you shake your asses and follow my directions.”

“We're going to dance for you?” Notus stood before her, his hands on his hips, the look on his face one of utter amazement. “I think it really should be the other way around, and you should strip for us.”

A gentle wave of her fingers spelled away their clothing. She winked at them, then clapped her hands in glee as their costumes appeared—a fireman's outfit, complete with a length of hose, for Jessup, and a cop, with a nightstick and handcuffs, for Notus.

“Gorgeous.” She licked her lips in anticipation of watching the two of them strip. She spelled a huge pile of pillows onto Notus's bed, then sat in the center.

“You're going to pay for this, you know.”

Jessup's voice was dangerously low, but it still held more than a little bit of excitement. He might act like he didn't like the idea, but deep down inside, it excited him, and that thrilled her.

“Oh, I sincerely hope so. But for now I'm going to enjoy myself. Strip, you two. Now.” The overhead light went out, and candles appeared, floating in the air, giving the room a soft, seductive feeling. There was just enough light for her to see the two of them.

“Music,” she whispered. “What shall I choose for music? Instrumental, I think, with just enough beat to make those hips move.”

A snap of her fingers filled the air with belly-dancing music, and she almost doubled over in laughter at the look on both of their faces.

“Now, amuse me, both of you, or I might just have to punish you for breaking the deal.”

For a few long moments it seemed as if they wouldn't move, and then suddenly their hips began to sway, in time with each other. Jessup wrapped the hose around his neck, then ran his hands up and down his muscular torso.

Notus twirled the nightstick around in circles, then placed it near his crotch as if it were an extension of his cock. She dissolved into giggles as he ran his hand up and down it as if he were jacking himself off.

She lay back on the bed and spelled away her own clothes, letting the music flow over her as her two lovers performed. Their earlier reluctance was gone, and they had thrown themselves into the fantasy with every fiber of their being. Jessup rode his hose, his hips moving in a seductive rhythm that made her clit twitch with anticipation. He licked his lips slowly as she watched him. When his gaze traveled down her body, stopping at her breasts, her nipples, already hard from watching them, hardened even more.

"Perhaps I chose the wrong costume for you, considering what we discussed earlier in the day."

She watched as understanding dawned. Beside him, Notus still played with his fake cock, the handcuffs hanging from his belt. He'd opened his shirt to expose his smooth, muscular chest.

Notus glanced at Regina, then moved the nightstick away and clasped his hand around his cock. She waved her fingers, and their costumes changed. Notus looked down at his in confusion, then cast a glance at Jessup.

"Officer," she said, turning to Jessup. "This young man needs to be arrested. He caused quite a scene in the park today, yelling at another man. He made quite a spectacle of himself."

"Is that right?" Jessup snapped the handcuffs on Notus's hands, and the younger faerie stared down at them. Regina could see that his confusion was gone. In its place was a look of intense need. He wanted what was about to happen, and the sooner it took place, the better.

Her hand slipped down between her legs as Jessup grasped a handful of Notus's hair and jerked his head back.

“Have you been a bad man today?”

“Yes, Sir.” Regina flicked a finger over her clit at Notus's answer. Jessup moved Notus roughly so that he faced Regina.

“Take off your pants, and if you use magic, your punishment will be much worse.” She rubbed herself harder as Notus, his wrists still bound, worked to undo the fireman's pants that he wore. The suspenders slipped from his shoulders as he tugged at the material. When the pants slipped off his hips the elastic suspenders caught on his elbows.

Jessup undid his pants and his cock jutted out proudly, hard and glistening with moisture at the tip.

“Yummy,” Regina said, flicking her finger over her clit again. The bud tightened and pulsed, and if it could, she knew it would yell for more attention. “Now, turn him around and spank his ass until it's beet red.”

## Chapter Twelve

Notus's prick jerked at her words. Jessup pushed him so that his ass faced Regina. A chain dropped from the ceiling. Jessup grabbed his bound hands, pulled them up, locked the chain around them, and then stood back.

The chain lifted until Notus's hands were high above his head. A bar appeared near his waist, and Jessup pushed him so that he was bent as far as he could go. His cock pulsed even more as he felt a chain wrap around his stomach, then go around the chain, effectively keeping him in place. A spreader bar appeared between his legs, the cuffs snapping tightly into place.

“Very nice.” He heard the hitch in Regina's voice and he turned so he could look over his shoulder. Her fingers worked her clit, her beautiful chest rising and falling rapidly. She was close, very close. “Now do it. You, bad man, turn around and take your punishment.”

Notus turned his head back, only to see Jessup standing in front of him slowly undoing the thick leather belt that held up his police uniform. He took it off, removing the implements and letting them fall to the ground.

The hard outline of Jessup's rigid cock inside the black pants showed Notus wasn't the only one who enjoyed being part of the floor show.

He released the belt from its final loop, then held it up for Notus to see. “It's thicker and wider than the last belt I used on your ass.”

“Yes, Sir.” Damn but he loved being spanked, and no one had ever done it with the flare and finesse that Jessup had. When Jessup lowered the belt and rubbed it on his cock, Notus thought he would come on the spot. “Oh please.”

“Let her hear you beg for it.” Jessup wrapped the belt around his cock and squeezed. Notus cried out, fighting hard to keep from losing his load all over the man standing in front of him.

“I said beg!”

He pulled the belt tighter, and Notus cried out again, the pleasure threatening to overtake his desire to play the scene out.

“Please, Sir, I was naughty and deserve to be punished. Please spank me. Mark me.”

“Regina?” Jessup let the belt loosen just a bit, and Notus gave a sigh of relief as the blood raced to his cock. “Is that good enough for me to start the whipping?”

“Not by half.” The sound of her fingers moving through her wet pussy fueled Notus's need.

He didn't wait for Jessup's prompt. “I'm so sorry. You have to believe me. I need to taste the leather, want to feel it for you, Regina. Please, Jessup, lay the leather across my ass. I'm begging you. Please.”

“Regina?” Jessup looked over Notus's shoulder, and Notus smiled as Regina's deep groan of release reached his ears.

“Obviously she enjoyed that very much, since she just came.” He placed his lips close to Notus's ear. “And she came hard, I can tell. Let's see if she likes seeing and hearing you get whipped. And be a good boy and don't come too soon. You know the longer you hold out, the higher the intensity.”

“Oh yes.” Notus knew how good it was to wait it out, especially when driven by the belt.

Jessup trailed the leather over his shoulder as he walked around the bar.

Notus sighed in pleasure as Jessup grasped the belt between two hands and snapped it, the sound loud and shiver producing. Then he rubbed the leather against Notus's bare ass, moving it slowly at first and then speeding up, the friction making his ass burn.

A groan of pleasure escaped his lips, and he cried out as Jessup let go of one end and slapped the belt against his ass in a satisfying pop.

“Harder, please.”

“Yes, harder.” Regina echoed his plea; only hers sounded more like a command. Jessup gave them both what they asked for, wielding the belt relentlessly, the strikes hitting the same spot, the rhythm slow but hard.

Notus relaxed into the pain, letting it snake into his cock, slide down into his balls. The burn was perfection, and he closed his eyes and savored every moment of it, wondering why he'd forgotten how wonderful Jessup's belt tasted.

He was sure his ass was nice and red now, the belt leaving marks on his skin that he hoped Regina enjoyed seeing.

“Oh, shit!” He lifted onto his toes as Jessup increased the pace, the strikes coming harder and faster, the intensity threatening to overtake him. He tried not to lose control of himself, but it was hard.

Regina stood before him, her hand wrapped around his cock, slowly sliding up and down.

“So beautiful,” she said. “Don't you just love the way he spansks?”

“Yes.” He rocked his hips into her hands, closed his eyes, and let the luscious sensation sweep over him. The softness of her hand combined with the bite of the belt was too much to take. He came hard, biting his lip to keep from crying out as she increased the motion of her hand, grasping him tighter as her free fingers gently roamed over his balls.

Jessup had stopped spanking him, and he wanted to scream at him to continue, but he knew his ass had probably had enough. For now.

He leaned toward Regina, intent on kissing her, his gaze going down and his eyes widening on what he saw. She wore a harness, with a flesh-colored strap-on sticking out proudly.

Her hand moved from his hard cock to her fake one. Behind her, Jessup flashed him an evil grin before placing his lips right next to her ear. When he spoke, it was loud enough for Notus to hear.

“Now, sweet Regina. Fuck him.”

Notus saw the indecision on her face, and he knew this was something new to her. She was intrigued, he could tell, but a little unsure how to proceed.

“First time with a cock?” He gave her a wink. “Don't worry. I love it.”

“Yes, he does.” Jessup gently squeezed her shoulders. “Just do to him what you love me to do when I take your sweet ass.”

Her face brightened and she stepped behind him and ran her hands over his burning flesh. He inhaled sharply as her soft touch made his cock twitch. Her next words made him smile.

“I'm too short.”

“Yes, I can see that.” Jessup went behind him, and Notus heard the sound of kissing. When he felt the fake cock rub between his ass cheeks, he knew Jessup had provided her with something to stand on.

She rocked it back and forth, the friction mixing with the previous burn, igniting his fire once again. The sound of the two of them kissing only added fuel to the blaze, and he wiggled his ass in invitation.

He closed his eyes in pleasure as Jessup's hard hands grasped each cheek and spread them apart. Something wet slid across his anus, and Jessup's finger spread the wetness inside. “Go on, love, give him your *cock*.”

Notus imagined her grabbing the synthetic cock in one hand as he felt the other hand go to the top of his cheeks. She pressed against him gently, her movements tentative.

“That's it,” Jessup said in a soft, seductive voice. “Slow and easy. Push a little harder. Yes, good girl.”

The tip of the cock slid into him, and he gasped at the feel of it. He hadn't noticed that it was so thick, but it definitely filled him as nothing had in a long time. He rocked back to let her know he welcomed the invasion, and she took him at his word, working the cock into his ass slowly at first and then with more confidence until he felt her hips press against his cheeks.

The cock felt warm and almost human as she gripped his hips and started to fuck him in long, even strokes, taking the dildo out to where nothing but the tip was inside him and then sliding back. Pure carnal bliss spread through him with each thrust, and he moaned to let her know how much he enjoyed her attention.

When he felt the soft mattress under him, he knew Jessup had transported them. Gone were the cuffs and bars that kept him in place. He lifted on his knees slightly to give her better access. The cock slid deeper inside him, hitting the sweet spot that produced the unique pleasure only having his ass filled could create.

A second orgasm threatened to overcome him, but he clenched his fists, not wanting to let go again so soon. He remembered Jessup's words before the spanking began. *"Let it build; keep it inside you for as long as you can."*

He reached a hand back and stroked her hip as she fucked him. Her soft gasps of exertion turned to pleasure, and Notus glanced back to see Jessup positioning himself behind her.

Their gazes locked, and then Jessup winked at him. "You're not the only one who likes to have his, or in this case her, ass filled." Regina's deep groan made Notus shiver. He could have sworn he felt Jessup slip his cock into her ass.

Her movements stopped, and he knew she felt the same joy he'd experienced just moments before. Jessup was working his cock into her ass the same way she'd done it to him. Within minutes they started to rock together, the grunts and groans from all three of them filling the room as they pressed their three bodies into one unit.

Notus wanted to turn, to put his hands on Regina, to feel her sweet, plump breasts and let his fingers slide over her swollen clit as Jessup fucked her. Instead



he lay down on the bed, absorbing the movement of all three of them. Each time Jessup thrust into her, the cock inside Notus's ass grazed the sensitive area deep inside him.

The desire to orgasm that had threatened earlier intensified, and as Jessup thrust and thrust, Notus couldn't hold back.

"Oh fuck! Yeah, that's it." His cock rubbed against the soft blanket as it throbbed, his seed spilling all over the bed. Above him Regina screamed, the sound like music to his ear as she let out first Jessup's name and then his.

Passion flowed through him, mixed with a power he'd never felt before. His eyes pulsed as if his blood were flowing at the speed of a supercharged locomotive, and he grasped the sheets as Jessup continued to fuck Regina, then let out his own cry of release.

They rolled onto their sides, the three of them still joined. Jessup's hand moved around Regina and came to rest on Notus's chest, which still rose and fell rapidly. He could feel Regina's breasts against his back, her nipples hard, her heart beating just as quickly as his was.

He'd never once in his life felt the amount of energy that surrounded him right now, and he had no doubt the other two felt it as well. He moved his head slightly when Regina laid her forehead against him, nestling down in obvious contentment.

The urge to ask them if they'd felt what he did was strong, but the stronger need was to lie there in silence and let the three of them slip into deep sleep, sated from the perfect joining they'd just experienced.

## Chapter Thirteen

Regina stood on the balcony, looking out over the cold October morning. They had three days now, three days before it would all be over. Only now that thought made her smile, made a laugh bubble up out of her mouth. She put a hand on her face to keep the laugh inside. She didn't want to wake the two dark faeries that slept nearby.

It was hard to hold in how happy she felt right now, though. She knew where the stone was, knew it was hidden in the turret at the end of the hallway where she'd stumbled. That thought made her smile lessen. She had stumbled, hadn't she? She could have sworn that she'd met with some sort of barrier, as if the hallway had been warded. But if that were true, why was she the only one who had felt it?

"Because you tripped." Behind her, Jessup wrapped his arms around her waist and pulled her back into his chest. He rested his chin on her shoulder. She snuggled into his arms.

"I'd love to get it now, but I'm afraid if we do, something will go wrong between now and Samhain and she'll get it back. I think we should wait until the thirtieth. Best to let her think that things are still going her way. What do you think?"

"I agree with you." He nuzzled against her neck. "We can use that time to convince Notus to help us, because we will need him. There's a strong ward against the turret door, and it will take the three of us to break through."

"I don't think it's going to be a problem. He had to have felt the power that passed between us earlier." She swiveled in his arms and wrapped her own around his neck. "I felt it."

"As did I. But, Regina, Notus is not like you and I. He's not capable of..."

“Of what?” When Jessup didn't answer, she traced her finger along the edge of his jaw. “You know, I said I didn't care what happened between the two of you all those years ago. After all, I wasn't even born yet. But the more time I spend with the two of you, the more I think maybe I do need to know.”

He took a step back from her. She had a feeling that his body language would imitate what he would tell her. He might give her bits and pieces, but she would probably never get to the truth.

“You know, you say that Notus is not like the two of us. Yet when we first met, you were not like me either. Do you remember that? You wanted nothing to do with me on a spiritual level. All you wanted was to fuck me.”

She thought a blush spread up his cheeks, but it quickly disappeared.

“Yes, that's true. But I quickly changed my mind, didn't I? You bewitched me.”

“I think it was the other way around.” She rose on her tiptoes and kissed him, capturing his lower lip between her teeth and nibbling on it ever so gently. “Not that it really matters how it happened. I'm just happy to wake up in your arms.”

He kissed the tip of her nose. “Tell me, how does it feel to wake up between us?”

“Should I give you the answer you want, or should I tell you the truth?”

She was thankful when he laughed. “I know the truth. I can feel it inside you when I touch you. There is a bond there, like you said.”

Her heart raced a little more. “Does that mean you believe me when I say we're”—she looked around and realized they were totally unprotected from eavesdropping—“you know.”

“Yes, I think I do.”

He thought for a long moment, and she feared what he would say next.

“No, what I mean to say is I know I do. That doesn't mean it's going to work out like a fairy tale, Regina. I don't think we'll have a problem with getting him to

work with us, but I do think we have to worry about him reporting back to Matlyn. Don't forget she brought him here for a reason."

"She brought you here for a reason, and look how that turned out." She ducked under his arm and went into the room, stopping short when she saw Notus sitting up in bed. "Good morning."

"And to you, tiger. I didn't want to interrupt your little tête-à-tête, so I thought I'd just sit here and, well, listen in." He leaned forward. "What exactly is it you wish my help with? And why are you afraid to speak of it out loud?"

"*Crap.*" Regina wrinkled up her nose. "*What should I tell him?*"

"*The truth always works.*" It took her a few minutes to realize it wasn't Jessup's voice she heard, but Notus's.

She whirled her head around to Jessup, who shrugged. He'd obviously heard both her and Notus. Further proof, she knew, that they were a triad.

Before she could form an answer about the truth, Jessup stepped forward. "I suggest a day at a spa. There are several near the springs in Baden-Baden. We can afford ourselves some privacy there, I believe."

"Privacy and a nice massage," Notus said, standing in all his naked glory. He rubbed a hand against his backside. "I have quite a sore ass this morning, and I think a good soak in a tub, or a mud bath, might help my aches and pains."

\* \* \*

Regina hated knowing what she wanted to say but not actually being able to put it into words. Notus could read her mind now, coming from the bond that had formed between the three of them. He knew what she wanted to say, but he wasn't making it easy on her by leaning back against the sauna and taking a deep breath.

"Just tell me whether or not you'll help, and whether or not you're going to give us up to Matlyn."

He shrugged, then ran a hand down his sweaty chest. "How have you managed to keep it from her all these years? Did you turn after you'd been with her for a while, or did you go into her camp as a spy?"

"The latter." She wiped her hands on a towel.

"You're a very good actress, then."

Regina shrugged. "Not really. I have some strong charms the elders gave me. They have shielded me from Matlyn's digs into my mind, and she's done quite a few. She trusts no one, and that would include you."

Notus's shrug didn't surprise her. "I've learned not to trust too many people in my lifetime as well."

"Because of me."

Those were the first words Jessup had spoken since they'd arrived at the spa. She knew he was thinking of something he didn't want her to know. He'd put up a shield to keep her out. At first she'd been angry, but then she'd decided not to push it. He was doing it for one of two reasons: he was deciding whether or not to tell her what had happened between himself and Notus, or he'd put up a shield to keep Notus out of his mind, and her blockage was a side effect. Whatever it was, he wasn't letting her in on the secret right now. She knew he would tell her when the time was right.

Both she and Notus waited for him to elaborate, but he didn't. If he wasn't going to do it, then it was time for her to press on. "The stone picks—"

Notus held up a finger. "You don't have to talk me into it. I'll do it." He focused his gaze not on her, but on Jessup. "These last few days I've thought long and hard about one race trying to take over another. On the surface, and since I'd have power, I like the idea. But what happens when Monk decides dark faeries would be better as slaves? Best to stop it now before it gets to the end."

Regina hadn't expected that out of him. He'd given no clue that he'd even been thinking about such a thing.

Notus continued. "I know that most of the triads are longtime lovers who have a unique bond, but I'm not the type to stick around. So listen carefully. I'll be part of this for the stone recovery and to see an end to your nemesis for the above-named reason and because I like you, Regina. I enjoy your company, and I definitely like the way you fuck me."

Heat spread through her, and it was more than the air from the sauna. Her clit twitched in need and that surprised her. She figured after last night it would be tapped out for a few days.

"Despite our past, I like you too, Jessup. But I know we'd never be able to live together, and so do you." Notus and Jessup exchanged a look, and the older faerie inclined his head ever so slightly. Regina waited for one of them to elaborate. Both of them had boxed up the story, putting walls around it that kept her out, which pissed her off.

"Not me," Notus said. "The story falls to your lover. I'll let him tell you."

"If it's going to hurt us as we move forward, then I need to know."

Jessup picked up a towel and held it to his face. "It's not going to hurt anything," he said in a muffled voice. "Maybe someday I'll tell you, Regina, but not now."

"I don't like the idea you're both keeping secrets from me."

They grew silent, and Regina waited for one of them to speak. When it was clear they weren't going to say anything, she shifted in her seat. The tension was thick, and she wondered if it would steal the breath from her lungs.

Whatever had come between them still festered, and neither of them was going to give up the information anytime soon.

She needed to say something to lighten things up. "Let's talk about cocks. They're one of my favorite things, and the idea of naming them fascinates me. I don't name my body parts. If you're not going to tell me what it's called, at least tell me the reasoning behind it."

Notus fixed a stare on her and a name popped into her mind. She gasped, then burst into laughter. "You're kidding me, right?"

"Not at all. He's named after a great crowd-pleaser, and he's pleased quite a few crowds in his life. Plus he likes getting into tight spots, escaping, and then going right back in, something I've been an expert in for some time now, not only with my cock, but with my mind and body."

Regina shook her head. "Harry, huh?"

"Yup. We saw him perform in—when was it, Jessup—1910, 1912? I don't remember the exact date." The tone of his voice had changed, and somehow Regina knew he remembered the exact date they'd seen the famous magician, and that it was part of the thing that was hidden behind the walls they'd both erected in their minds.

Jessup didn't answer Notus's question, so she decided a change of subject was in order. "Is your cock named after someone famous too?"

"Nope." He walked to the rocks and poured more water on them. They released a fresh burst of steam, which he sniffed at in appreciation. "While we've got this area warded, we need to come up with a plan to get the stone. Any ideas?"

Notus stretched out, crossing his ankles. "Break down the ward, sneak into the turret, and take it. Between the two of us, it won't be hard to take Regina as far as London, where we can give the stone to the elders and they can do their thing. I don't see any difficulties."

Regina shook her head in disbelief. "It's not going to be that simple. Trust me. It took us several tries before we could get near the garnet and get it to trust us."

"Yes, it did." Jessup sat down next to her. "But this time the stone will listen to us. If you remember, getting the garnet to cooperate was seventy-five percent of the battle. Once we'd convinced it we meant no harm, it was happy to work with us. The stone already trusts all three of us."

"I just hope we're not oversimplifying it." Regina swept her hand over her damp hair.

"We do it tonight," Jessup said, coming to sit right next to her.

She shot him a curious look, and he continued without being asked. "That way if we fail, we have time to try again."

Regina couldn't argue with his logic. She leaned back, wondering if this was really coming true, if her years of servitude to the elders and of having to see the bitch every day were coming to an end. Would she actually wake up on November 1 and not have to look at her or bow down to her?

"You can bow to me instead," Jessup said. He leaned over and kissed her shoulder, and she burst into laughter.

"Hmm." Notus practically purred the word, and she gave him a look.

"That's my noise, thank you very much."

He gave her a seductive smile. "Patented, is it?"

"Yes, as a matter of fact, it is." She looked down to where Jessup's finger was moving from her knee up to her pussy.

"She's particularly good at that noise when she's sucking your cock." Jessup palmed his dick and she licked her lips. "She's got you nice and deep in her mouth and she purrs. The sensation is quite...exquisite."

He pumped himself and Regina's mouth watered with need. "Shall we practice your servitude now? On your knees, Regina."

She obeyed immediately, the slippery wood of the sauna floor a delicious bite against her knees. She licked the head of Jessup's cock, slid her tongue over the slit, and savored the taste of his precum. She hissed in pain when he clasped her hair in hand and gave a tug.

"Suck me proper." Need rushed through her. She loved it when he was harsh like this, and he seemed to always know the right time for it. She opened her mouth and tilted her head just enough for him to slip inside.



Jessup clasped the sides of her head and moved her up and down on him, the movement hard and fast. He hit the back of her throat, pulling out when she tried to gasp for air, giving her just enough time to recover before pushing back in.

Her breath came in deep, harsh gasps, and after a few wonderful moments of him filling her mouth, she started to purr, sucking in air through her nose and letting the sensation overtake her voice box. She loved purring. The tingly feeling it produced made her want to shift and run, but what she was doing now was the next best thing.

“Oh fuck! I can't tell you how incredible it feels, Notus. You're going to have to experience it.” Jessup gently pulled her head back, stroking her hair. “Suck him, sweet tiger.”

She could hear Notus working his hand up and down his cock. The idea of sucking them at the same time, alternating which hard cock filled her mouth, made her pussy clench with need.

He stood slowly, coming to stand next to Jessup. Out of the corner of her eye she could see his hard cock straining upward as if begging her to take him in her mouth. She swirled her tongue around Jessup, then turned her attention to Notus.

Regina closed her mouth around him. She gave herself over to the taste of him. The purr started instantly, and she savored his shiver. She sucked him hard, sliding her mouth up and down his shaft, very aware that Jessup stood beside them, watching intently.

Jessup's silky skin felt fantastic as she reached out and grasped his hard cock. She pumped him as she sucked Notus. She loved the feel of them, one in her mouth and one in her hand. The only better thing would be one in her mouth and one in her pussy.

Her head moved back, and Jessup's hand stopped her from going back down on Notus's cock. “Stand up.”

Notus helped her to her feet, kissing her gently as he moved to sit down.

“Bend over, my tiger, and suck that cock. Fill your mouth. Take him deep.”

“Oh fuck.” She did as he asked, gasping when Jessup slammed into her pussy as she bent. Notus pushed her head down, and she swallowed him, going up and down, releasing him to lick his length and tease his balls before sucking him back.

The delicious naughtiness of sucking one and fucking the other overloaded her senses. Sweat poured off her as they rocked together, and in a perfect world they could stay locked like this forever, changing positions, their hands and arms and legs entwined as they entered each other, fucking and sucking until they were exhausted enough to sleep. Then they would start all over again when they woke up.

“Perfect plan,” Jessup said, his fingers seeking out her clit. He stroked her as he fucked her, and she purred harder, knowing he could sense it as it vibrated through her body. The murmurs of contentment from the two of them soaked into her. She worked her mouth harder and pushed back to greet Jessup's thrusts.

She tickled Notus's balls as she sucked, and when they drew up, she knew he was close. She lifted her gaze to his, letting her fist take the place of her mouth. She watched him as he came, his eyes seeming to burn into her as cream coated her hand.

He ran his tongue over his upper lip, then pushed her head into his lap as he leaned over and joined Jessup in teasing her clit. The addition of his fingers sent her over the edge. Her orgasm started hard and grew as Jessup clasped her hips, his fingers biting into her skin. He fucked her hard and harder, and when he came she felt his warmth spread into her.

Regina placed her head on Notus's thigh as the two of them stroked her back. She felt as if she could blend into both of them, as if the three could become one and they would never miss a beat.

She started purring again, satisfaction filling her as she thought that by this time tomorrow, she'd be in London. The elders would have the stone, and she'd be able to lie in the arms of the two men who now caressed her.

No, not the two men, just one of them. Notus wouldn't stay with them; he'd made that very clear. Maybe he'd come to visit sometime. But it wouldn't be the same.

"It will be fine," Notus said, running his finger through her hair. "Besides, you'd get tired of me before long."

"Doubtful." Jessup helped her up, then reached for Notus.

When the two men's hands clasped, Regina felt a surge of power. What would it take, she wondered, to convince Notus to stay with them?

There wasn't time for that now, though. They needed to work on the problem at hand.

"Speaking of that," Notus said, "when I arrived, Matlyn said she wanted me to break the two of you up. I knew she was using me, but there had to be a reason she wanted to drive a wedge between the two of you. She told me it was because she wanted Regina back in her bed, but I think there's something more to it than that. I think she might have something planned before Samhain."

Fear snaked down Regina's spine. "If she's planning something, she knows the garnet is fake. I know her. If she had them both, she would wait until the proper time."

An uneasy silence passed between them; then Jessup sighed heavily. "We do it now, right now. Regina, you go and talk to her while Notus and I try to work on the wards."

"But you'll need me, need my power. It's a triad, not a duo."

"And your part will be distracting her." He ran his knuckle over her cheek. "She's going to feel it when the ward comes down. If you're with her, you can strike at her then. You can take care of her."

A lump formed in Regina's throat. She'd never killed anyone before, always made sure to stand clear of that when Matlyn killed, and that was quite often.

"You can do it." Jessup's voice was soft, soothing. "It's not pleasant, but it has to be done."

"Cut off the head of the snake," Notus said. "The others will panic."

"Exactly." Jessup hadn't taken his gaze off her. "If we do it right now, we'll catch them off guard."

He was right, of course, but that didn't make the idea any more palatable. "I'll do it. I'm not sure how, but I'll do it."

The world around her buzzed. "Jessup?" She put out a hand, touching nothing but cold, empty air.

"Regina!"

His voice sounded as if it were far away. When she heard Notus scream for her too, she knew she was the only one traveling. She landed with a hard thud, the force knocking the air out of her lungs.

Stars flashed before her eyes as she tried to catch her breath. But when she put out a hand she met an invisible barrier. She stretched out her other hand only to be met with the same difficulty.

"What the hell?"

A familiar laugh made her blood run cold. She lifted her gaze to see Matlyn standing in front of her. "Oh look, she's naked. How delicious."

## Chapter Fourteen

Regina stood, and the bubble that surrounded her went with her. Her head pounded with the force of her landing. She felt as if she might faint.

“Matlyn.”

“Yes, traitor, it's me. Welcome.” She winked at her and blew a kiss. “I'm so sorry about the tight space, but I couldn't risk you having room to shift and possibly breaking out. I tried the spell last night, just a small taste of it to see if I could keep you from moving in a certain way. Guess what? It worked.”

So, she hadn't felt a ward, just a spell meant only for her. She told herself not to panic, that Jessup and Notus would be here any moment to take her away from all this. She waited while Matlyn stared at her. And she waited. And waited. And nothing happened.

“What have you done with them?” A glance around the room showed they were alone, and Regina frowned.

Matlyn ignored her question. “I know what you're thinking, that I don't have enough power to do something like this, and you're right. I don't. Transportation isn't something that witches specialize in, but dark faeries, however, do.”

Dark faeries? That meant she did have another here somewhere. Had whoever he was already harmed Jessup and Notus? She wrapped her arms around herself and tried to feel Jessup. She felt nothing. Either her invisible prison stopped her senses from going out, or Jessup was dead.

Her heart seized at the thought, and she gasped, her fear and anger turning to pure hatred when Matlyn laughed. “So very wonderful to feel you in the grips of

pain. But don't worry; he's not dead. I have plans for him and for the other dark faerie too."

"They won't let you get away with it. They'll be here within seconds to rescue me." She put conviction into her words, even though there was a twinge of doubt in her mind that they would be able to fight the power Matlyn seemed to have right now.

"I'd like you to meet a new friend of mine." She snapped her fingers, and a man appeared behind her. "His name is Loher. Does that ring a bell to you?"

A faerie appeared behind Regina, his hair an ash-blond, his eyes deep blue. The dark look he gave Regina made her nerve endings tingle in fear. This was one angry man.

"Should it?"

"If your lovers were honest with you, it would." Matlyn raked her gaze up and down Regina's body. Regina put her hands on her hips, refusing to back down from the obvious attempt to intimidate her. "Since you're not answering, I suppose that means that no, they didn't tell you about their past."

Matlyn turned to the faerie and tweaked a nipple on his bare chest. "Loher's a half-breed, but he has all the power of his dark faerie father and his light faerie mother. Not all his siblings were so lucky, though. They had power, but not a lot. It was one of his brothers, Lamkie, who died in 1957, at the hands of your lovers."

Regina's blood ran cold. Obviously Jessup and Notus should have shared their secret with her, because it was coming forth right now to bite them on the ass.

"You know about 1957 American teenagers? They were into cars, racing, music, fucking." Matlyn laughed. "I suppose, really, it's just like present-day teenagers, only different type cars. Ones that turn deadly when they slam into a mountain."

This time her blood felt as if it were frozen.

“The faerie council termed it an accident, and no one was punished.” The faerie's voice was as dark as his look. “Until now.”

“If they had a car wreck, then it was an accident.” She hoped her tone was even. Maybe he would respond to some reason.

“They were playing chicken with some mortals. When they realized what was happening, they made sure they were safe, but did they think about Lamkie? No. They knew he was a half-breed with little power, yet they left him in the car. There was nothing left of him for a proper burial.”

She tried to take a step back as the faerie put his hands on the invisible wall. “They killed him as surely as if they took a knife to his throat”—Loher growled—“which is what I'm going to do to you, while they watch.”

He disappeared, and Regina glanced at Matlyn. “I had considered keeping you around as a play toy for Doc and Monk, but Loher said he would help only if he could kill you. Sorry.” She shrugged as if she were apologizing for breaking a glass at someone's house.

“Doc and Monk?” There was no way that was possible. Doc was dead, and Monk was in suspension.

Matlyn spelled herself a chair and sat down. “Did you know the bloodstone helps you communicate with the dead?”

Regina followed Matlyn's gaze to where the bloodstone sat on a pedestal. It pulsed with energy, the red lines gleaming and shooting out from the hard surface. It was calling to her, and she couldn't get to it.

“Doc and I had a wonderful conversation the other night. He suggested, since I was down to one stone”—Matlyn gave her a pointed look, and Regina glanced away—“that I bring him back. I told him about Loher, and then I contacted the faerie and asked if he wanted to help me. He agreed. We've drawn two pentagrams. One for Jessup, the other for Notus. I gave Doc first choice, since he is my lover. He decided to take Notus's body, since it is the younger of the two. We'll put Monk's spirit into Jessup's.”

Horror filled her as she realized what was going to happen. If they'd drawn pentagrams, they would need blood to activate them. It was always needed for the dark spells. And they were going to use her blood.

"The best part about it is the dark faeries won't really die. Their souls will be relegated to a small part of their brains to watch while we take over. It's perfect, really."

"It'll never work, no matter what you think." Regina looked away from her.

"You think not? Well, we'll see in a few hours. Notus is first, and then Doc will help me bring back Monk. I've cornered the market on bloodstones, actually on all the stones in the pentagram, in an effort to keep a lot of power in the room. Since Monk isn't really dead, the bloodstone won't help us communicate with him, but it never hurts to be prepared for any eventuality."

"They will come for me before you get anything done."

"We'll see, but I think I'm getting quite a bargain, don't you?" Matlyn laughed, and Regina thought she would throw up. "I get Doc back, and we get Monk, all for the price of one shape-shifter, kind of a two-for-one sale. I feel like a human child at Christmas."

\* \* \*

"Son of a fucking bitch!" Jessup pounded on the door, then tried once again to break it down with an energy bolt. The power surged back into him in a painful arc, and he crumbled to his knees.

"Don't waste your power or your rage," Notus said. "We're going to need it, obviously."

There was an invisible shield separating them, something they'd found out the hard way when they'd tried to join hands to merge their powers in an effort to break out of the sauna room. The barrier had shocked them both, singeing the tips of their fingers. Healing the burns had taken a lot out of both of them.

"She's got to have a dark faerie helping her, or more than one."



Jessup nodded as he tried to use his senses to reach Regina. He hit a brick wall that made him cry out in frustration. “That fucking bitch. If she hurts Regina, I’ll snap her neck myself.”

“I’ll hold her down for you.”

Jessup glanced over at Notus, who sat with his back against the wall.

“She’s got to release us at some point, either that or send someone to kill us.”

“No,” Jessup replied, “if she was going to kill us, she would have done it when she took Regina. She has some sort of plan for us.”

“Jessup.” Notus had moved to the center of the room. “Do you think we can draw on the stone’s power from here? If we truly are its guardians, then why can’t we use it?”

The idea had merit. “The stone can do many things. Maybe it can help us communicate with Regina. But I don’t know if it will work with us on opposite sides of this force field. But it’s definitely worth a try.”

They put their hands up on either side of the shield and stared into each other’s eyes.

“Notus?”

“Yes, Jessup.”

Jessup swallowed hard. A lump threatened to take his voice as he thought of never seeing Regina again, never holding her in his arms, never feeling her lips under his. Tears stung his eyes, and he blinked them away. “Promise that if something happens to me, you’ll see to Regina. Make sure she’s safe. Take care of her. Swear it to me.”

There was a slight pause before Notus said, “I swear, but it won’t be necessary. We’ll take care of her together. You’ll see.”

There was a long silence before Jessup said, “What happened all those years ago was my fault. I should have gone back for him when I realized—”

“Realized that I'd left him? No, you were driving. I'm the one who was free. I should have done it.” The younger faerie looked as if he, too, might cry. “He trusted me to do it, and I failed him. I thought only of myself. You were right when you told Regina I can't be trusted.”

Jessup put his hand on the barrier. On the other side, Notus stood, his arms at his side, his head facing downward.

“Look at me.” Jessup wasn't surprised when Notus ignored his command, and he had to repeat it again. He put more force behind the words this time. When the younger faerie looked at him, the pain he felt was quite obvious. His eyes were rimmed with red, as if he held back tears.

“Sometimes I think about what happened, and I realize that I wronged you as much as I did Lamkie.” When Notus opened his mouth to speak, Jessup shot him an evil glare, and Notus closed his mouth. “There had to have been a better way to handle things.”

“Why replay it now?” Notus's resentment was obvious. “We have other things to worry about.”

“True, but I blamed you, and I'm sorry. And I've missed you.” Jessup hadn't planned the last words, but they seemed to slip out before he could stop them.

“Oh.” Was that surprise or disbelief he heard in Notus's voice?

“I know I was less than welcoming to you, but...” He paused as he tried to collect his thoughts. “Over the years I've managed to place the blame for Lamkie's death totally at your feet. When I saw you there, it came rushing back, and I knew that it wasn't just you, and I didn't...I didn't want Regina to find out about what had happened. I was ashamed, and seeing you brought it all back.”

“And now?” He heard the catch in Notus's voice.

“Now I realize how much I've missed you. You were my best friend, and I managed to fuck that up.” He laughed nervously.

"We fucked it up," Notus said. "It wasn't just you. I've missed you too, and I have to admit to a large amount of jealousy where Regina is concerned. She's extraordinary."

"You have no idea how true that statement is." Jessup put his other hand on the barrier, and Notus did the same. "We need to work together to save her and to save ourselves. No matter what I said before, I trust you with my life, and I trust you to help me save her. Do you trust me?"

Notus's nod was quick and hard.

"Good. Then let's think about Regina, and let's find a way out of this."

Jessup closed his eyes and pictured his white tiger running through a field of grass before she shifted and came to him, her skin glistening with sweat, her breasts heaving, her face bright with a smile as she held out her arms in invitation.

"Darling, we're coming to get you. Don't worry. Everything will be just fine."

\* \* \*

Regina moved from foot to foot, trying to alleviate the pain that now radiated up her legs. She'd been standing for hours. Her legs hurt, her back ached, and her neck was sore. She needed to move from this position, even if it was just an inch or two.

She glanced over at the bloodstone, which pulsed with energy. It knew she was in trouble and it wanted to help. But every time it tried to send her energy, the shield deflected it, and Regina felt as if she'd been zapped.

"Jessup. Notus." She blinked back tears, knowing they would do no good. Still, it pained her to think all her years of work had been for nothing. Matlyn was going to win, Monk would rise again, and it would be her blood that would fuel him when he took over her lover's body.

"I love feeling your misery, your pain." Matlyn appeared out of nowhere. "It's such a beautiful sight, especially when I think about all you did during the years we were together, stabbing me in the back and all."

“We were never together, Matlyn.”

“Oh yes, we were. I remember how you loved to eat my pussy.”

Regina shrugged in indifference. “It was a job, nothing more.”

“That makes you a prostitute, and nothing more. Doesn't it bother you that the elders don't think any more of you than that? All you had to do was keep me satisfied.”

The snort came out of Regina's mouth before she could stop it. “You might think that, but it's not true. My objective was to watch your every move, to report back to the elders, and to, hopefully, keep you off guard. It worked. And you lost two stones while on my watch. I consider that quite successful.”

Anger flashed over Matlyn's face, and Regina laughed, knowing the witch would do nothing to her before the ceremony.

“What's wrong, Matlyn? Are you angry because you were stupid enough to think I cared for you? The first time we had sex do you remember what you told me?” Regina cleared her throat and put on a falsetto voice. “Remember, Regina, that there is no such thing as love. It's a myth the outer forces use to try and keep people in line. There's nothing more to sex than lust, and people are, basically, interchangeable.' That's what you said, right?”

Rage took the place of anger, and for a moment Regina thought—no, she hoped—that Matlyn would strike out at her. If she did, Regina would take advantage of the momentary weakness to strike out and hopefully kill Matlyn. Her earlier qualms about doing so were gone.

“I never loved you, Regina.”

“Liar.” Regina narrowed her eyes just a little. “I may have been a possession to you, but you love possessions, which means you loved me, no matter what you say.”

“What I'm going to love is watching you die.” She turned away from Regina and stalked to where the pentagrams were drawn on the floor. She walked the

outline of the first one, then the second, as if she were checking them for deficiencies.

The room was silent except for the sound of her feet hitting the floor. Regina watched her, trying to think of something else she could say to throw the witch off guard.

“So, when the men are back and you're in third place, what are you going to do with your life?”

Matlyn stopped, her gaze locked on the floor.

“What's wrong? Did you never think of that? Monk will want to take over, and Doc will be his right hand. You'll be what their...whore? Of course, it might be easier for you to take since they'll have two wonderfully hard bodies for you to fuck. The dark faeries are tasty, I can tell you.”

“Too bad you've tasted your last of them.”

“Too bad you'll never know their love. It's worth much more than fucking.”

“Love means nothing!” Matlyn stalked toward her, her hand balled into fists. “And I won't be third. I'm the one who'll have brought them back. They'll...they'll...elevate me...”

“Above them? Not likely.” Regina laughed. “You see why it was easy for me to fool you? You'll believe anything.”

Matlyn lifted her hand to strike, and Regina readied herself for the break in the shield. Before it came, though, there was a loud *pop*, and two witches appeared. They held Notus's limp body between them.

They walked to the first pentagram and dropped him. Matlyn whirled on them, a bolt of energy shooting from her finger, hitting first one, then the other.

“Idiots! Did I not tell you to take care with him? He's going to play host to a man far above your station.”

“She doesn't want to fuck a bruised body, in other words.” Regina yawned. “She only wants to play whore to the best.”

Matlyn turned quickly, shooting out her hand. Before she could strike, though, Loher appeared and grasped her wrist.

"I've waited a long time for this, and I'm not going to let you screw it up. She's just trying to piss you off."

"Any one of my witches will provide you with the blood we need."

"But none of your witches matter to them, and that's what's important to me. I don't give a shit about the two you're bringing back. What I care about is seeing Jessup and Notus in pain." He jerked his head at the two men still prone on the floor. "You two, straighten him up. Then get the hell out."

He stalked to a table and picked up a wicked-looking knife. It wasn't an athame, used for casting, but one that he would be using to slice her skin open to drain her blood. Her fear returned, and she prayed to the Goddess that it would freeze the blood in her veins, not give him any to drain for his ritual.

When the two witches left, Regina glanced at the pentagram. Notus lay in the middle, as still as if he were dead. The slight rise and fall of his chest proved his heart still beat.

Regina reached out with her mind, trying to connect with him. She ran into a huge blank wall, and she gulped down a sob. "Notus."

"Is gone, essentially," Matlyn said. "In about ten minutes, he'll be contained forever."

Regina turned her attention to Loher, who was wrapping a long black robe around his body. The door opened, and eight witches, all dressed in black hooded robes, came inside. Five of them carried bells. They walked to the pentagram and took a place at each point.

The other two walked toward her and stood, hands folded, waiting for instructions.

"Matlyn, help them secure her to the altar." Loher gave her an evil smile, then walked to the pentagram, looking down. Regina could only guess what was going

through his mind. If he had waited fifty-three years to avenge his brother's death, even though it had clearly been an accident, he was filled with rage.

And she would be the target of it, via that wicked knife he still held in his hand.

Matlyn moved in front of her, her victory lighting up her face. "Be a good girl, Regina. The first bleeding will not kill you, because we'll need you alive for the second ceremony too. Loher is waking up Notus now so he can watch you bleed. Don't fight us. If you do, I'll find a wayward witch in the hallway and kill her, and it will be all your fault."

*Like that will stop me. If I let you win, millions die.* She didn't respond but acted as if she understood and would obey, all the while trying to decide what she could do to prolong the situation until Jessup and Notus arrived. They would come for her. They had to come for her. The barrier came down, and the first acolyte reached for her.

His hand closed around her wrist, and heat surged through her. From underneath the black robe, Jessup's face beamed, his grin making her breath catch in her throat. He winked at her and mouthed, *I love you. Follow my lead.*

## Chapter Fifteen

Regina blinked as his hand moved to hers and squeezed. He put his hand on her waist, and she felt him place something in her pocket, and then they started toward the pentagram where Loher stood, patiently waiting.

Notus still lay in the middle, but she knew he was awake and seeing everything that was happening.

When they got close enough, Loher took her hand and dragged her the rest of the way. He slid the knife over her wrist, and a sharp pain spread up her arm. A small trickle of blood seeped from the wound, and then the bleeding stopped.

Loher's eyes widened in surprise, and Regina immediately knew what Jessup had slipped into her pocket: a bloodstone, known for its ability to heal wounds.

"What is happening?" Matlyn pushed her way into the pentagram and stood right over Notus. She cried out, and Regina looked down just in time to see Notus clasp his legs around her ankles and send her tumbling down.

Jessup rushed forward, shooting out bolts of energy that took down Loher and three of the black-robed figures standing around the pentagram.

"You're done, Matlyn. Did you think any witches you sent could overpower us? The only reason you got Regina was because you had the element of surprise. Your fatal mistake was leaving us behind."

"Was it?" Matlyn's voice was full of hate. "Well, I won't make it again."

She reached for the knife still clutched in Loher's hand. Before she could reach it, Jessup was on her, his knee landing on her. She cried out in pain as Jessup sat on her.



Notus stepped over Loher's crumpled body and advanced on Matlyn. "You lied to me, bitch. I don't take things like that very well."

"Like I give a damn!" She pushed Jessup off, sending him flying halfway across the room, then shot to her feet, sending a bolt of energy toward Notus. Notus deflected it, then backhanded her, sending her sprawling across the floor.

"Get the stone!" he yelled as he ducked another charge she threw his way.

Jessup was beside her in seconds, propelling her toward the stand where the bloodstone waited. It pulsed with energy, the glow increasing the closer they got to it.

Before they could reach it, Matlyn was back, her energy blasts flying across the room. They slammed into Jessup's chest. Light beams flared out as they struck.

"Get it and leave."

Jessup's voice sounded weak, and she knew Matlyn had caught him off guard with the energy blasts, and it had strained his power. She was sure it had done the same thing to Notus.

"No! I won't leave." But Jessup wasn't listening to her. He was running toward where Matlyn and Notus now tussled on the floor.

Jessup joined the fight, and Regina took a step toward it, until she felt the call of the bloodstone. Indecision raced through her as the two dark faeries battled Matlyn, the sound of their power hitting the walls and competing with cries of pain when a bolt landed in the right spot. Regina knew she couldn't think about that now. Jessup was right when he said they had a job to do. If, by some horrible twist of fate, Matlyn happened to defeat the two of them, she could still complete the ritual and bring back Doc and Monk, and she couldn't let that happen.

Regina raced to the bloodstone, put both hands on it, and lifted it from its pedestal. She could swear she could hear it singing in her ear; the song gave her great thanks for taking it away from this evil place. She turned toward the fight, intent on stepping into it when the stone surged with power.

Matlyn cried out in pain, as did the three acolytes still standing. Within seconds, everything was quiet.

Regina stared, dumbfounded as Jessup and Notus stood and backed away from Matlyn's limp form.

"Is she dead?"

"No." Jessup looked at his hands, then glanced back at Regina. "Merely incapacitated."

"The stone." She held it up, her gaze drawn to the glow that emanated from the powerful gem. She was drawn to it, unable to move. She held it close to her chest and felt the power course through her.

"You'll never win." Matlyn's weak voice sounded as if it came from deep inside a well. "Loher, finish it. Kill one of the useless pieces of flesh near the pentagram and bring Doc back. Now!"

Regina glanced at the faerie, who stared at Matlyn before looking at the three witches lying near his feet.

"Do it!" Matlyn's shrill cry was louder than her previous words. Regina knew the longer she lay there, the more strength she recovered.

"No." Loher's answer was low. "I came to kill one of these two, not some faceless witch that will bring me no satisfaction."

Regina could see him sizing up his options. His gaze shifted between Jessup and Notus, and she had to do something. She had no doubt they could best him in a fight, but one of them might get hurt and...

"Loher." Regina kept her voice soft. "Tell me something. If you can bring back souls and insert them into bodies, why didn't you bring back your brother during all this time? Why wait until now?"

"They have to pay!"

A knife appeared in his hand, and he grasped it so tightly Regina thought it might shatter.

"No, you could have made them pay long before this." She took a cautious step toward him. If she could catch him off guard, she could knock him out, and they would deal with him later. But every second she spent dealing with him meant time for Matlyn to recover. She took another step.

"They weren't together before this. I wanted them to watch, wanted them to see someone they care about die." He waved the knife between them. "I want them to feel the pain of loss."

"Kill them!"

Matlyn's voice sounded even stronger. Regina looked down at her. The witch tried to push up, but she didn't seem quite strong enough yet. She fell back down, then put her hand against her forehead as if trying to stop pain.

Regina took another step toward Loher. "You didn't answer my question, but I don't think you need to. You tried to bring him back, didn't you? But he wouldn't cooperate with you. Why?"

Loher's hand shook, and Regina could feel the pain radiating out from him. "He wasn't strong enough." His voice shook as he spoke.

"No." Regina took another step, and for the first time he looked at her. Tears stained his cheeks, and her heart went out to him. "He refused, didn't he? If he hadn't, you would be putting his soul into either Jessup or Notus. That would be the ultimate revenge, wouldn't it? Putting him inside someone you hold responsible for his death."

Loher lowered the knife to his side. "I tried for days after he died. He told me it wasn't natural, that I should be ashamed of myself for even trying."

"You imbecile! Don't you see what she's doing?" Regina looked over to Matlyn. The witch was now on her knees. She tried to stand but fell back, breaking her fall with her hands.

"How would he feel about what you're doing now?" Regina stayed in place. "You obviously loved him very much and cared about his opinion. Tell me what he would say."

"He would say I was being an idiot." The knife clattered to the floor. "The little shit."

"It was my fault." The sound of Jessup's voice startled Regina. She'd been so focused on Loher that she'd blocked out the two men standing near where Matlyn lay.

"No, it was mine." Notus's voice was strong. He put a hand on Jessup's shoulder, and Regina felt tears sting her eyes. "I blamed Jessup, but in reality it was me who screwed up. I should have taken Lamkie from the car. Loher, I...I'm so sorry."

His voice broke on the last words, and Regina's tears broke free.

Loher had been staring at the floor. Now he gazed at the two dark faeries. "You've never said that before."

"You're right," Notus replied. "And I'm sorry for that also."

"So am I," Jessup interjected. "It's late, but it's an honest feeling."

"Who gives a bloody damn?" Matlyn was on her feet now. She opened her hand, and the knife Loher had dropped floated toward her. The slowness of its movements told Regina Matlyn wasn't quite up to speed yet.

As she watched, though, the knife shifted, turning directions in midair. It flew toward Notus, slamming into his stomach with a ferocity that belied its earlier movements. The dark faerie cried out in pain, then crumpled. Jessup caught him and lowered him to the floor.

"Notus!" Her cry mixed with Jessup's, and rage soared through Regina. She glared at Matlyn, who was again holding out her hand. The knife withdrew from Notus and moved to strike Jessup.

Regina burst into speed. The stone clattered to the ground as she dropped it. She jumped and shifted, her target clear. She was on Matlyn in seconds, her claws fully extended. One swipe across her throat was all it took.

The witch cried out in pain, her hands clutching at her wounds. Regina growled at her, then raked her claws down Matlyn's stomach. Her eyes were wide with shock. Blood flowed from the wounds, coating the floor and Regina's silky white paw.

The knife clattered to the floor, the sound one of the most satisfying things Regina had ever heard.

She shifted back to human form, then rose to her feet. Matlyn took several deep breaths before her hand dropped to the floor. Her eyes were glassy with death. Regina stared at her, wondering why she was feeling nothing but emptiness. She couldn't stop looking at her lifeless form. It was almost as if she thought the witch was faking and would jump to life, her body somehow repaired.

"Regina!" Jessup's panicked voice broke her trance. "I need you. Get the stone."

"What?" She gasped as she turned to them. Notus's blood covered Jessup's robe. The older faerie held his hand against his friend's wound, obviously trying to staunch the flow of blood.

"The stone. Its healing properties can help."

She ran toward it, not surprised to find it still in one piece. She picked it up and jogged back to the faeries. Loher stood nearby; he seemed as transfixed by what was happening as she had been by Matlyn's death.

Jessup motioned for her to kneel. The pain in his eyes told her exactly how much he'd cared for Notus before the accident.

"Hurry, put it on him, right on the wound." The blood flow increased as Jessup moved his hand. Regina placed the stone on Notus's skin. The red veins in the gem seemed to grow larger, but the blood continued to run out from Notus's body.

Regina locked gazes with Jessup, who nodded. At the same time they each took one of Notus's hands and placed it on top of the stone. They moved their own so that two sets of hands covered his own.

Power heated her blood. She felt it moving through her veins. It heated her body as it rushed through her. Below her, Notus started to twitch. His body arched and fell back down, then arched again.

She started crying again and turned to Jessup. Tears stained his cheeks also. She grasped his hand and squeezed.

"He's going to be fine," she whispered. "You'll see."

Jessup glanced at her, and she gave him a shy smile. When he lowered his head, she could see his lips moving. He wasn't one to pray to the Goddess, so she wondered if he was saying a spell, one that would somehow heal Notus.

Then she heard his words in her mind. *"Don't die now, my friend. Not when we're just finding each other again."*

Regina pressed harder on the stone, and Notus responded by jerking upward. Then he gasped, a long, drawn-out sound that made her heated blood turn cold. When he grew silent, his body stilled.

"No. Please, Goddess, please. Don't let him die." The moments seemed to drag by, and she looked at the stone. The blood no longer flowed from under it, and she knew that could be for two reasons. Notus could be dead, or the stone had healed the wound.

She glanced at Jessup, who still stared down at Notus. She followed his gaze and studied Notus's face. It was peaceful now, his eyes and mouth closed. But she thought she detected the slightest movement around his nose.

When he opened his eyes and blinked, she wanted to scream for joy.

"Tell me she's dead."

His words were hoarse, and she could tell it took Notus great effort to speak.

"Our tiger took care of her," Jessup told him. Then he bent and placed his lips on Notus's forehead.

Regina's blood warmed, and tears once again flowed. This time, however, she felt nothing but joy for the scene playing out in front of her. Jessup traced his finger over Notus's temple, and she heard a whispered, "Just stay still for a while."

Notus's reply of "Yes, sir" made her laugh. Jessup pulled her to him. He kissed her gently before whispering "I love you" against her lips.

"I love you too."

"Excuse me." Notus's voice was stronger now. "What about me? I'm the one who was stabbed, remember?"

She bent to place her lips upon his, thrilled beyond words when he responded. Jessup stroked her hair as Notus claimed her mouth, and her dark faerie's words echoed in her ears.

"*Our tiger took care of her.*" Not mine. Not Regina, but our tiger. Perhaps the stone had been right all along. Maybe there was hope for them being a permanent triad.

"Don't worry. I'll nurse you back to health." She stroked Notus's cheek. "There will be lots of tender loving care."

"Only if the doctor prescribes it," Jessup interjected. She turned her gaze on him to find him looking at Notus. "And I believe he does, in megadoses."

\* \* \*

The ceremony to banish Monk for all eternity seemed anticlimactic. Regina had expected bells and whistles or even chanting and some sort of prayer. Instead the elders had guided the triads to the points of the pentagram that contained their stones.

When she, Jessup, and Notus had taken their places and put the bloodstone in its spot, the pentagram had glowed. Monk's body had lifted and levitated for a few short seconds before it turned to ash and floated back to the ground.

She'd turned to the elder nearest her. "*That's it?*"

"Yes," he'd replied. *"You did your job very well, and now we have triumphed. When you are out in the world today, enjoying the sunshine, remember that you had a hand in keeping the light shining."*

His words had signaled an end to the ceremony, and the people gathered had slowly slipped away. Two triads, the groups who had fought to find their stones, stopped by to thank her for all she'd done.

She'd been happy to see Tobias, Ansling, and Kellen, although Kellen had been less than thrilled to see her. He'd hung back while his mates greeted her. She supposed she couldn't blame him. She was a reminder of a dark time in his life, one that he would probably love to forget.

Jalon, Gelsey, and Cian—the triad that had recovered the garnet—had been talkative and spent much of the time laughing and poking each other with playful gestures.

Regina had been saddened by the closeness of these two groups of people. It reminded her that, while she and her two dark faeries had recovered the stone, there had been no discussion about the three of them staying together.

Of course, Notus had spent much of the time with a healer. At first she and Jessup had stayed by his side, and she'd been encouraged to see Jessup so attentive to his friend. He'd told the healer how to do his job, until the man had kicked him out.

After that he'd spent time closeted with Loher. When they'd come out, he hadn't told her of their conversation, and she respected their right to privacy, although she was curious. She'd made a mental note to do some gentle probing when things had calmed down.

Which was now, she reminded herself as the cave, where Monk's body had lain in repose for so many years, emptied.

Jessup pulled her into his arms and kissed the top of her head. She held out her hand, and Notus took it and brought it to his lips.



Was she imagining things, or had the two of them exchanged a look? No, that couldn't be. She was so used to reading things into people's looks and touches after her years undercover that she wasn't exactly sure how she was supposed to act now. Or what she was supposed to do.

"I'm hungry," she said. "I want Thai food. Lots of it."

"That can be arranged," Jessup said, winking at her.

The room shimmered, and Regina sighed as warmth spread through her. Jessup held one of her hands, Notus the other. When they arrived at their destination, she looked around the room.

"Where are we?"

"Our home," Jessup replied. "I found this place a few years ago and knew it would be perfect for when things were over. It's very isolated, and that gives you plenty of room to shift and run to your heart's content."

"Are we in England?"

"Yes," Notus replied. "When he showed me this place, Jessup told me of your desire to come home. I think this fits the bill beautifully."

She dropped their hands, then took a step away from them. "He showed you? When?"

The two men exchanged sheepish looks. Finally, Notus said, "Last night. He and Loher came to see me, and when Loher was gone, Jessup and I took a little trip."

Regina crossed her arms over her chest. "Okay, now I'm pissed off. The three of you met? And then you came here without me?"

Jessup took a step toward her but she growled at him. He stopped at the warning, but he was still smiling.

"You have to forgive us, Regina. Death is not something faeries have to deal with very often, and when Lamkie was killed it put a hole in our world. It caused

the ripple effects that you know about, including Loher's repressed anger that boiled over when Matlyn approached him, and the split between Notus and myself."

She wasn't sure what to say. The air was thick with tension, as if each of them was waiting for the other one to speak first. When neither of them spoke, she cleared her throat.

"So what does this mean?"

"It means, if you'll have the both of us, then we'll set up house here, see what happens." Notus's words were very matter-of-fact, but she could hear the apprehension behind them. She wondered if he expected someone to say it was time for him to leave.

"I told Notus this yesterday. I was closer to him than I've ever been to anyone, and then the accident occurred and it split us apart. I didn't let another person near until I met you."

Her heart thumped harder at his words, and she remembered the gruff dark faerie she'd met several years ago who had told her in no uncertain terms that the only thing she was good for was pleasing his cock.

Now she knew he couldn't live without her; nor could she live without him.

"We'd hoped," Notus said, his tone still uncertain, "that you would enjoy having two dark faeries at your beck and call."

"We'd visit lots of interesting places," Jessup said.

"Have interesting discussions about any topic you like," Notus continued.

"And have lots of wild, kinky sex."

Jessup's words made her body tingle in anticipation. She thought about their times together and how she'd experienced new heights of passion. It had been unlike anything she'd ever felt before, even though she was no stranger to having sex with more than one person at a time. She'd almost become immune to it during her time in Matlyn's court.

“You have to feed me first.” She dropped her arms to her sides. “Then we’ll talk about sex.”

Jessup waved his arm, and the smell of curry and spicy peppers filled the air. Notus turned her toward a table loaded with food. Steam rose from the dishes, and she walked over to survey the offerings: curry, rice noodles, shrimp rolls, lobster, and many dishes she didn’t know the names to.

Notus picked up a roll and placed it near her mouth. She took a bite, savoring the taste of shrimp that permeated her taste buds.

“Delicious.”

“Then sit down,” Jessup said. He took her hand and guided her to a cushion. “Let us feed you, and we can discuss our future.”

They took turns feeding her, Jessup offering her a taste of the curry, and then Notus feeding her noodles that he’d wrapped around chopsticks. Each bite filled her belly, and it also revved her desire for the two men sitting beside her. She wondered how it would work living with two men.

“One bed,” Jessup said, “with you in the middle.”

“And it would be a democracy,” Notus added. “We’d all have a say in how things run.”

“Except for when I’m in charge”—the words spilled out of Jessup’s mouth very quickly—“which, you know, I am. After all I am the oldest.”

“No argument there,” Notus replied. “Just remember when it comes to Harry and Little Jesse, Harry has the final say.”

Jessup opened his mouth but before he could speak, Regina held up her hand. “Little Jesse?” She cocked an eyebrow at Jessup.

“His cock.” Notus pointed to Jessup’s crotch. “Oh, that’s right. We never told you, did we?”

“That’s because you gave him that name, not me.” Jessup winked at her. “Ignore him.”

“He's just angry because he doesn't like the name. But it fits.”

Regina laughed, then put her hands in front of her mouth when Jessup frowned. “Sorry, but it doesn't fit, Notus. His cock is far from little.”

“It fits because it pisses him off when I use it. And it gets me what I want.”

“Careful, young pup, or you'll taste leather tonight.”

A grin lit up Notus's face. “See what I mean? It gets me what I want.”

“Well then, Little Jesse will have to come out to play.” Regina shivered in pleasure.

The look on Jessup's face bordered between annoyance and arousal. She was happy when the annoyance disappeared and he reached for her.

“You'd better be careful too.” He pushed her back on the pillow and kissed her neck. His lips trailed down her body as her clothing disappeared. “I can spank more than one person at a time.”

She moaned as Jessup's lips closed around a nipple and Notus claimed her mouth with his own. A girl could definitely get used to this sort of attention.

“That's good,” Jessup said after lifting his mouth from her breast. “Because we can too. With no trouble at all.”

 THE END 

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Melinda Barron loves to explore Egyptian tombs and temples, discover Mayan ruins, play in castles towers, and explore new cities and countries. She generally does it all from the comfort of her home by opening a book.

A multi-published author of erotica, Melinda is the fourth of five children born to an Army officer and his wife. A longtime newspaper journalist, Melinda loved to read and write from an early age. Now she lives in the Texas Panhandle with two cats, and enough books to, according to her brother, open her own library. In addition to reading and writing Melinda enjoys travel, cross-stitching, watching movies and spending time with her friends and family.