

MIMI RISER

JUST ANOTHER
LONELY KNIGHT

Book II of My Knightly Adventures

JUST ANOTHER LONELY KNIGHT

...My breath stops along with my steps as I reach a small break in the leafy wall and peer through it. This must be how Medusa's victims felt when they were turned to stone. It's a wonder I'm not blinded on the spot. Mortal eyes aren't meant for such fierce beauty.

I'm transfixed, paralyzed by the sight of two naked figures lying face to face on their sides, on a tumble of shed clothes, in the center of a small clearing. Their legs twine as their mouths meld together in a kiss. Hands rove—touching, stroking—exploring divinely sculpted torsos. Two glorious males, one golden as an angel, the other devil-dark. Heaven and hell in one lovers' embrace.

Their heaven, my hell.

The dark one is Glenn—just as I expected, just as I feared. I thought I recognized the husky timbre of his voice. But I don't know what to think now. I can't think! The reasoning part of my brain seems to have shut off. I'm nothing but a sensory sponge soaking up the sound and sight and scent, the lush physical feel of the scene.

I almost taste their kiss on my tongue—hot and sweet like burnt sugar, more intoxicating than liquor. A bottomless, boiling sea of a kiss. I know because I've drowned in many similar ones.

Wolfred's kisses.

Yes, that's my knight there with Glenn. I thought I

recognized his voice, too, but I didn't believe my ears. I'm not sure I believe my eyes either, but I must. How ironic to consider that, for Wolfred's sake, I've refused all Glenn's advances, and now Wolfred is the one who succumbs.

Well, he did once say "fey charms be difficult for we mortals to resist." I just didn't realize he included himself in the "we."

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My Knightly Adventures

Book I: A Knight To Remember

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MY KNIGHTLY ADVENTURES
BOOK II:
JUST ANOTHER
LONELY KNIGHT

BY

MIMI RISER

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JUST ANOTHER LONELY KNIGHT
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*To all the craft-show gypsies of the world,
a crazy and wonderful breed. Having been one myself once, I
can say it's not an easy profession, but its rewards
are many: freedom, adventure, and the chance to interact with
a most magical assortment of people (I'm pretty sure
I met more than a few fairies and fey-kin in my time on the
circuit—although none so sexy as Glenn).*

JUST ANOTHER LONELY KNIGHT

What a pain in the butt.

Sir Glendel Goodfellow—Glenn to his friends—frowned as he followed a faint fragrance trail over raised roots and under low, leafy limbs. For all that he was a Guardian of the Northern Astral Gates, which marked him a Master of earth-element magic, he didn't particularly relish rustic surroundings. He was a connoisseur of wildlife, but not this kind.

Glenn's earthiness manifested itself in other ways. Hot nights in sexy clubs were more to his taste than a walk in the

JUST ANOTHER LONELY KNIGHT

woods. His nose wrinkled at the mixed odors of decaying mulch and green, growing things. Death and rebirth in the same breath. Both curious concepts to an Immortal.

Oh, he understood such matters on the cosmic scale but not the gut level. For instance, did it hurt to die, he wondered absently. If Wicked of the West resurrected from his recent destruction, perhaps he'd ask that dark lord.

If he remembered.

And still cared by then.

In truth, not much held Glenn's interest these days. Eternity stretched before and after him with a dreary sameness. Put bluntly, he was bored. A little lonely, too, though he hated to admit it. Humans thought fey folk enjoyed such a blithesome existence. How could ordinary mortals comprehend the tedium of Forever?

With no death in sight, it grew ever more difficult to know you were alive. He felt hollow inside—and the sensation had escalated since a couple of extraordinary ordinaries had blown through this realm. The enigmatic Sir Wolfred and his equally intriguing lady. It was their scent Glenn followed tonight—the pungent scent of passion laced with a bittersweet whiff of wish magic.

Using the smells as fuel, he kindled a viewing-fire in the air before him and conjured the couple's image, saw two naked bodies locked together in wild lovemaking under the very trees where he stood. A steamy, X-rated vision of the near past. He waved his hand and the scene blurred, then reformed to show him Wolfred and Dee as they were now, this moment,

JUST ANOTHER LONELY KNIGHT

on the other side of the veil.

Damn, they were still at it, happily humping away. A lusty pair, those two. One male and one female, but both beautiful in the throes of erotic ecstasy. Both very appealing.

Glenn's cock stiffened in automatic response—which suited him fine. Thank the Fates there was one thing he still felt full force. Sexual energy filled the void in him and set his ancient pulse racing with fresh vigor.

Hmm...maybe this mission wouldn't be such a bummer after all.

As the vision faded into smoke, he knelt and flicked aside a few dried leaves. Ah-ha! There beneath them, looking way too innocent for the damage it had wrought, lay the object he'd traced to these woods—a soiled scrap of pink and green floss, the ragged remains of a wish spell. One of two spells—one wish Here, and one There. When both were granted, it had opened a door between this realm and the mortal world.

A door, which for safety's sake and to maintain the Cosmic Balance, Glenn had to close and lock. Except this bit of floss gave him only half the key. To find the rest, he'd have to find the couple of his vision. A dangerous, dirty job, no doubt. Travel to the mortal realm was always risky, and doubly so in this instance.

But someone had to do it.

Chuckling, he pocketed the pink and green floss, zeroed in psychically on the path he needed to take, then snapped his fingers and disappeared in a thunderclap. He did love grand exits. Grand entrances, too.

JUST ANOTHER LONELY KNIGHT

Crash!

Well, maybe not this grand.

Ouch. What the fuck had he landed on?

* * *

My wheels? Aw, no. Son of a bitch.

The High Plains Summer Ren Faire in west Texas is my favorite market. Two weeks of camping out and making money—a madcap return to the Middle Ages—the highlight of Dee Day Designs’ yearly craft show circuit. Three years I’ve hawked my handcrafted jewelry here. Three years I’ve waited to snag one of the coveted cool spots under the elms that shade this end of the fairgrounds. And what happens when I finally get one?

Bam! It sounds like a tree just fell on my vintage VW van.

Not a pretty prospect. The van is older than I am and held together with not much more than bubblegum, paperclips, and prayers under the best of circumstances. I should climb out of my equally shaky but nifty looking medieval-style tent and see what the damage is. Except I doubt I could make it to my feet right now if an entire forest fell.

It’s the middle of the night.

I’m on my belly in a tumble of sleeping bags.

And the fleshy equivalent of another tree trunk is plowing me up the center, wreaking hot, holy havoc between my legs. A marvelous male body is glued to mine and has been for hours. We’ve been fucking front-to-front, back-to-front, on our sides, standing, sitting... I’m amazed the tent hasn’t

JUST ANOTHER LONELY KNIGHT

collapsed—to say nothing of an amazing erection. Can we spell s-t-a-m-i-n-a?

The new man in my life is turning out to be a sex fiend. Rather a surprise, that, because he's so...so courteous and courtly on the outside. But I'm not complaining. I happen to be something of a sex fiend myself. Even more, I'm madly in love and making up for lost time.

After what could be termed a “whirlwind courtship”—literally—followed by a god-awful separation, Wolfred and I have only recently been reunited. We met last month under...um, let's just say unique circumstances.

No, better make that insane circumstances.

Aw, hell, we met in a whole frigging other dimension is what we did. Two haphazard wishes transported us there, then another ripped us apart. When I least expected it, and least wanted it, I was tossed back to modern-day America.

Without him.

I was devastated. I thought I'd never see him again. I should have had more faith in the magic that brought us together in the first place, should have better believed the power of love. Whether it was more the one or the other that did the trick, I don't know and don't care. Suffice it to say that three days ago he made it back to my side.

Unfortunately, I've had to spend half the time since then driving here and setting up my campsite. But for the rest of it, I've hardly been able to keep my hands off him. To be honest, I haven't even tried. There'll be an army of play knights at this faire, but mine is the real thing—a golden haired, blue-eyed

JUST ANOTHER LONELY KNIGHT

package of muscle and gallantry straight out the pages of legend. Walking glory.

Sir Wolfred of Camelot—yes, *the* Camelot—is everything I've always wanted and more than I ever hoped to find. Strong, brave, and beautiful inside and out. I can't get enough of him. Thank God he seems to feel the same way.

He feels damn good, in fact, one heavy-duty, passion-powered man grinding me into the bedroll, pounding me deaf, dumb, and blind. Rough stuff, maybe, but I *like* it rough—and Wolfred does it with such exquisite finesse. Well, he's got a lot to work with. Seriously, the lance on this knight is to die for. I may not be able to walk come morning, but I'm wallowing in a blaze of carnal bliss now.

He shoves into me one final time—rams his cock in hard and deep. On the thrust he climaxes, and I come with him, a simultaneous orgasm that shakes the ground, rocks the tent around us. Or so it appears. It sure rocks me. I hear the whistle of skyrocketes and a staccato *pop-pop-pop* as fireworks light up the darkness.

Holy shit.

I suppose I should be grateful they're only miniatures, kind of like exploding fireflies. But exploding anythings are disconcerting in a canvas enclosure.

"Bloody hell," Wolfred curses.

"What? You didn't like that? I was just adding some appropriate audiovisual to the proceedings," a melodious, male voice answers—a voice I recognize even though I've heard it only once before.

JUST ANOTHER LONELY KNIGHT

My stomach clenches in alarm. If this is who I think it is, he's a magical creature from the magical realm where I met Wolfred. His coming here to the real world spells one thing.

Trouble.

"Mage Glenn, you *do* choose the sorriest times to manifest yourself." With an angry grunt, Wolfred rolls off me and springs, stark naked, to his feet.

I see him in an ethereal, incandescent glow created by the remnants of the fairy fireworks, which have merged together and risen like a small moon to the peaked center of the tent. Beside him, an inch or two taller but a little less broad, stands an exotically handsome figure wearing nothing but biker boots, black leather slacks, and a wicked grin. A wild mane of glossy black hair grazes his tanned, bare shoulders, and pure mischief gleams in his dark eyes.

It's Glenn all right. "Glenn the Good," as he introduced himself on our previous meeting—and looking every bit as bad now as he did then. He's bisexual and totally upfront about it. Or, in his case, maybe it's more like *all-sexual*. The trouble may be worse than I feared.

I grab the nearest article of clothing—a faded red terrycloth robe I keep handy for nightly treks to the ladies' room—yank it on and scramble upright almost in the same move.

"Manifest?" Glenn's gaze slants from Wolfred to me and back to Wolfred. His predatory grin puckers into a pout. "Hell, I simply *walked* in here. My big entrance happened outside. And you missed it." He sighs. "Probably just as well. It wasn't

JUST ANOTHER LONELY KNIGHT

one of my better ones. I intended to materialize smack in front of you—as a surprise—but I misjudged the dimensional leap and hit a pile of scrap metal instead.”

My van. So that was the *tree* I heard. Crap. I hope everyone else missed it, too. The last time I saw Glenn materialize, he dropped out of the sky in a large, glimmery globe. If he arrived here the same way...

I shudder.

The publicity of a UFO sighting is the last thing I need with Wolfred’s safety at stake. I’m not sure exactly what kind of danger my knight might be facing, but I can envision a real media circus if the wrong people discover who and what he is. I can also envision him being hauled off for study like some lab animal. Hence, we’re trying to keep a low profile until he adjusts enough to the twenty-first century to not give himself away.

Which makes this particular market a godsend. Where better to hide a man from the past than a huge, gaudy Ren Faire? Wolfred’s old world speech and mannerisms will blend right in here. Hopefully, vendors and visitors alike will think he’s role-playing along with the rest of the crowd.

Providing Glenn hasn’t already blown the show for us. Even if no one saw him appear, his mere presence poses a potential threat. According to faire regulations, we’re strictly forbidden to have overnight guests—and the administrators are pretty insistent their regulations be obeyed. Or else.

“Never mind your big entrance. How fast can you make a small, discreet exit?” I hiss at him. “You’re not allowed to be

JUST ANOTHER LONELY KNIGHT

here.”

“Oh yeah?” He quirks an eyebrow at me. “Says who?”

“The coordinators of this event,” I whisper, having no idea if someone from a fantasy realm will understand my mundane explanation, but offering it, nonetheless. “They run things like a military camp. From nine A.M. till dusk the place is open to the public, but after dark only the registered participants are permitted inside the palisade fence, and fair wards patrol the grounds to enforce the rules.”

“Those beefy dudes in the brown tights and tunics?” Glenn’s left brow lifts to match the right. “I saw a couple of them when I was sniffing out which tent was yours.”

I suppress a groan. “Terrific. And if they saw you, they’ll probably be here any second to investigate, since you’re not in medieval dress and, therefore, stick out like a sore thumb.”

“Uh-huh.” His brows raise a notch higher. “And that’s a problem?”

“Not to me.” Because I’ve just decided what to do about it. I cross my arms over my chest. “If they do show up I’m going to pretend I don’t know who the hell you are. I’ll tell them you invaded my space—which you have—and let them boot you out on your butt if they want.”

“If they *can*,” he corrects, and that wicked grin reappears—a grin that could melt underwear at twenty paces. At close range it’s almost orgasmic.

Ouch.

Electric shivers sweep me. I flinch inwardly at the heat radiating off him and hate myself for reacting to it. There was

JUST ANOTHER LONELY KNIGHT

a time—and not so long ago—when I'd have relished the sensation. But now?

As an extremely well fucked woman who's gaga over the guy who did the fucking, I've no business whatsoever feeling this way. I thought I'd laid to rest the dark desires that once haunted me, that with Wolfred in my life I'd never again crave or even want to think of another man.

::Aye. But as Glenn here is something more than a man, I'll forgive you for it, my lady. Fey charms be difficult for we mortals to resist.::

Which means?

My spine stiffens at the sound of Wolfred's voice in my head instead of my ears. He's something more than a man himself. As much as I love him, we haven't been together very long yet, and I'm still adjusting to the fact he can read my mind.

::And 'tis lucky for you I do.:: Wolfred's arm curls around my waist, pulling me snug against his side, a playful and possessive gesture. *::Could I not look within you and see your love is true, I might feel obliged to put you over me knee and warm your backside as punishment for fickleness.::* His hand slips downward to caress my ass. *::Mayhap I will anyway, if only to give you a penance to soothe your sense of guilt.::*

A penance I'd enjoy, which he knows darn well since it's impossible for me to keep secrets from Wolfred. Unfortunately, that doesn't work in reverse, so I'm surprised to discover this kind of kink in his generally straightforward lustiness.

JUST ANOTHER LONELY KNIGHT

::But not disappointed.:: An audible chuckle punctuates the projected thought. *::You've much yet to discover about me.::*

"I'll vouch for that," Glenn murmurs.

Shit. Has he been eavesdropping on our silent conversation?

"Of course." Studying Wolfred and me, Glenn's dark eyes narrow into smoky slits. "If you're going to spank her, may I watch?"

"No," Wolfred answers aloud. But gauging by the way he and Glenn are staring at each other, I gather a lot more is being said telepathically.

Okay, I'm at a definite disadvantage here. They can read my thoughts and each other's—and I can't read anyone's. Hell, I'm not even certain what *I'm* thinking at the moment. I do know I want Glenn to leave, though. Now. He unnerves me on too many levels.

"Thank you. I'll take that as a compliment." Glenn flashes me a wink with the words.

That does it. Where the fuck are the faire wards? I twist out of Wolfred's hold, ready to storm forth and scream for them.

"No, you'll not." A warm grip closes around my wrist, and Wolfred reels me back to his side. "Mage Glenn has just been telling me why he's here. He needs your aid in a matter of grave concern."

"Then why didn't he tell *me*?" I grumble.

"Because you're being a bitch," Glenn drawls.

JUST ANOTHER LONELY KNIGHT

“Better that than an ass,” I snap. “If you want my help, insulting me is a great way to get it.”

Wolfred blinks. “‘Bitch’ is an insult?”

No, it wouldn’t be to him, I suppose. It would just mean female. Among his other distinctive qualities, Wolfred has a certain...um, canine aspect to his character. He’s a...well, sort of a werewolf. Not one who changes into a complete wolf, but he does an awesome two-legged version.

“I know,” Glenn says in a husky whisper. “I think it’s pretty sexy, too. Don’t you?”

Yes, as a matter of fact, but I’m trying to steer my mind *away* from sex, for godssake. No mean feat with a gorgeous, naked knight beside me and a hot-eyed elf or wizard or whatever the hell Glenn is standing almost as near.

“An *elf*? Hardly.” Glenn snorts. “I’m a Guardian of the Astral Gates. Glendel Goodfellow is my full name and, despite Wolfred’s quaint penchant for calling me ‘mage,’ I carry the knight’s title of Sir.”

How nice for him.

I feel my spine stiffen anew. This having my every thought read and noted is getting old fast.

“Thanks so much,” I say, clipping off each consonant close to the nub. “That explains a whole frigging lot.”

“As much as you need to know.” Sir Tall-Dark-And-Aggravating aims his heat-ray grin at me.

I fire back a frosty frown. “Not quite.”

Wolfred interrupts me with a cough. Why, I’m not sure. All things considered, I should think he’d be on my side in this

JUST ANOTHER LONELY KNIGHT

head-butting contest. Then again, I left Glenn's world way earlier than Wolfred did. Who knows what transpired between the two of them after that and before Wolfred joined me here.

"You mean you haven't told her?" Glenn's gaze flicks from me to Wolfred. "Shall I enlighten her?"

"As to what? There be naught to tell," Wolfred answers—a little too quickly, it seems. His eyes meet Glenn's, and it doesn't take a telepath to interpret the warning in his expression.

For the record, Wolfred hates killing. As knights go, he's funny that way. But he's not above giving someone a fat lip if the situation merits it. *Close your mouth, or I'll close it for you*, his look says.

Glenn heaves a dramatic sigh.

"Neither one of you are turning out to be much fun," he complains.

I resist the urge to bang two male skulls together. As I'm almost as tall as they are, and strong for a woman, I bet I could do it, too.

"No doubt." Wolfred chuckles.

I do wish he wouldn't read my thoughts *all* the time. Given that we're from two such different eras, I knew Wolfred and I wouldn't have a carefree relationship. I figured there'd be a few hurdles to leap on the way to long-term happiness. But I didn't expect this particular problem.

There's a beautiful, special intimacy that comes with mind-to-mind communication, but a lack of privacy as well. I'm never alone in my head anymore, and I've no control over

JUST ANOTHER LONELY KNIGHT

the situation. Our telepathic link is a one-way street. Wolfred can see deep into me, but I'm unable to reciprocate. It seems a little unfair.

For both of us.

Like now. Wolfred has gone tense and silent beside me. He's so idealistic, wants everything to be perfect between us, and believes love will conquer all. I know my current thoughts disturb him, but I don't know what to do about it.

"Nether does Wolfred," Glenn says softly. "The problem is he has no more control over the situation than you do. He's only recently acquired the bulk of his telepathic powers."

Tell me something I don't know. Wolfred's "wolf magic mind-talk," as he calls it, goes hand in hand with his shape-shifting ability. Which he once considered a curse because he shifted only at the full moon—whether he wanted to or not. And he didn't want to. It's okay now, though, since he finally tamed his *inner beast*, which allows him to change back and forth at will. However, I fail to see what this has to do with our present difficulty.

"The point," Glenn persists, "is that his telepathy is on full blast. Constantly. He hasn't yet learned how to adjust the volume, so to speak, or turn it off."

"Mayhap. But 'tis my concern and I'll deal with it as I see fit. Have I asked for your aid?" Wolfred gives him another eye to eye warning.

Glenn parries the look with a shrug. "No, but you need it. I can teach you how to moderate your talents." His gaze slants to me. "I could teach you a few things, too."

JUST ANOTHER LONELY KNIGHT

Yeah, I can just imagine. In fact, I feel the embarrassing burn of a blush as I do. The power of suggestion is a fiendish force.

“I meant about *telepathy*.” Glenn makes a tsk-tsk noise and shakes his head. “Get your mind out of the gutter, girl.”

I’m trying, believe me! But it’s not easy with... Oh, hell, I’ve already explained why. Y’ know, I’ve never been prone to migraines, but I think I’m getting one now.

“I could cure it for you,” Glenn offers, all innocence. “Among my other skills, I have a *healing touch*.”

His lips curl into The Grin.

Pleeeeeease may I scream for the faire wards?

“No.” Wolfred claps his hand over my mouth to ensure I don’t.

“Is she always this emotional?” Glenn asks.

“Ow!” Wolfred answers.

But only because I just bit him. Amazing he didn’t see it coming, what with his mind so firmly entrenched in mine. Wouldn’t you think he’d know instantly what I intended? Then again, I didn’t know, myself, I was going to bite him until I did. I have an impulsive side that sometimes dives into action without the slightest forethought. I have a lot of sides, actually. Multifaceted, that’s me.

“Aye,” Wolfred agrees. “’Tis why I love you.”

Huh. And here I thought it was because I’m a good lay.

“That, too.” He flexes his chomped hand, as though to make sure all the fingers are still attached, but I suspect the gesture is mainly for show. I didn’t bite him *that* hard.

JUST ANOTHER LONELY KNIGHT

“Hard enough. However”—the hand in question raises to tuck a stray wisp of hair behind my ear—“because I love you, I forgive you.”

My heart hitches as breathtaking blue eyes melt into mine. He may be asking me to forgive him as well. But since he doesn’t say so, and I, of course, lack the wherewithal to plumb the depths of his soul the way he explores me, I can’t be sure, now can I?

“You can be sure I adore you, my lady. What else need be said?”

I don’t know.

I love him, too, that’s for certain. But I’m beginning to think I might *like* him better if he could manage to back off—just a bit, just occasionally. Five fucking minutes of mental privacy now and then. Is that too much to ask?

“Oh dear, trouble in paradise.” Glenn chuckles. “You two really do need my help, don’t you?”

Wolfred shoots him a scowl. “Methought ’twas you who needed our help.”

“And I thought you said it was *my* help he came for,” I interject because I can smell another males-only mind debate brewing, and I don’t care to be left out of the loop anymore.

Except, I already have been. Yep, they’re at it again, like a couple of stags locking eyeballs instead of horns.

I throw up my hands in surrender.

“Fine. You two hash it out between yourselves.” Whatever *it* is. “I’m going to the ladies’ room.” I expect one of them to stop me as I exit the tent, but they’re so engrossed in their

JUST ANOTHER LONELY KNIGHT

telepathic *tête-à-tête*, I wonder if they even heard me.

“Of course we heard you,” Glenn mutters. “But no man, mortal or otherwise, would try to stop a woman who’s bent on taking a pee. What do you think we are? Stupid?”

He said it, not me.

On that note, I trudge barefoot across the sleeping fairground, by the light of a half moon, to the new, concrete block, permanent restrooms. Nothing fancy, but a major improvement over the port-o-lets we had here last year, let me tell you. These facilities sport the Spartan comforts of flush johns and sinks with running water, even if none of it’s hot. Plus they offer the surprising luxury of showers—two, anyway, one in the men’s half of the building and one in the women’s.

I didn’t bring a towel or soap with me, but maybe I’ll indulge in a quick rinse-off, regardless. God knows I could use a cold shower.

As I enter the place, a long, cool corridor of a room, stark and white in the harsh glare of a bare bulb in the ceiling, I’m disappointed to see that the single shower stall at the far end is occupied. Who—besides me—would bathe in the middle of the night?

I’m wondering if I dare duck over to the guys’ side and use their shower, when the water shuts off and the stall door swings open, exposing a dainty, ethereal beauty with alabaster skin and raven dark curls. A heady blast of rose scented steam knocks me back a pace.

Cough.

JUST ANOTHER LONELY KNIGHT

Steam? Without hot water?

I clutch at a nearby sink to keep my balance, but I'm afraid I've already lost it. My mental balance, I mean.

"Ms. Day? Dee?" a silky voice asks. "Is that you?"

Um...honestly, I'm not sure. That rose perfume, which I've smelled before—once—is some kind of drug, I think. It muddled my mind a month ago, and it's doing the same thing now—only more so.

"It's not perfume, sweetie. It's my natural essence. As soon as I dry off and dress, my gown will muffle it a bit, and we'll have a nice chat."

Why bother, when *everyone*, it seems, can read my mind?

"Well, we could converse telepathically if you like. But after the aggravation you've had with Wolfred and Glendel, I should think you'd prefer a little good old-fashioned girl talk."

Perhaps I would. But with *her*?

"Who better?"

She has a point. This is Lady Morgan La Fey, and she's some kind of fairy or witch.

"Both, actually." A ripple of laughter underlines the clarification.

Whatever. She's also the reason Wolfred and I are together.

"Nonsense. That you love each other is why you're together. I simply provided the means for you to meet."

And a curious means it was, too. Silly, even. I met Morgan last month at Crompton's Craft Show and Flea Market, having no idea she was a magical being. I didn't believe in magic,

JUST ANOTHER LONELY KNIGHT

period, then. I thought she was just another craftsperson like me. Thus, when she gave me three spiral twisted lengths of brightly colored cotton floss, which she called “wish bracelets,” I had no idea those strange little charms really worked.

“I was rather surprised at how things turned out, myself,” Morgan murmurs without elaborating.

A bubble of mirth rises up in me and comes out in a giggle. No particular reason for it, except her “natural essence” makes me giddy. She’s dressed now, but the scent seems to have intensified rather than diminished. Something warns me I ought to feel alarmed, but instead I just feel as though I’ve had a few too many beers. I giggle again.

“At least you needn’t fear having a hangover in the morning.” Morgan giggles with me. “Fey fragrance is intoxicating but harmless.”

If she says so.

Hey, how come Glenn doesn’t smell like her, I wonder on a sudden whim.

“Because he’s not a fey but fey-kin. Sir Glendel is a Gate Guardian,” she explains—which tells me as much as Glenn did. In other words, not much.

He really is a knight then? I don’t know why this surprises me.

“Oh yes, one of the best. He’s marvelous with a sword,” she says with a sly wink.

More giggles bubble out. Hers. Mine. I feel like I’m back in high school, talking boys and trading dirty jokes with my

JUST ANOTHER LONELY KNIGHT

friends in the girls' locker room. I feel like we're doing something naughty.

"We are," Morgan purrs. "But it's all in good fun."

Why don't I believe her?

Looking like an illustration out of *The Blue Fairy Book*—looking like the Blue Fairy herself—a vision in clouds of sapphire chiffon, she wafts forward and stops a half step away, then levitates a foot off the floor, which brings us eye to eye. An emerald green gaze digs deep into me, and my brain fills with fog. I hear Morgan as though she's speaking through a long tube, her voice hollow and echoing.

"Do you know why I'm here?" she asks, and then answers the question herself. "For the same reason Glendel is. Because a hole has appeared in one of the dimensional veils, a tiny tear in the fabric of time and space. Small but dangerous. It has opened a portal between this world and the fey realms that disrupts the Cosmic Balance."

Uh-huh. I'll admit that sounds serious, but what's it got to do with me?

"A great deal. I sensed the disturbance the moment it occurred and traced its source to you, Dee—or, more specifically, the wish bracelets I gave you. They work on a principle of time-released magic. It's a three-step process as I'm sure you recall. One makes a wish, ties on a bracelet, then waits. If the bracelet is allowed to fall off naturally, one's wish will be granted. Sometimes the process is swift, sometimes not. In your case, it happened both ways. You used two bracelets in the fey realm. The first dropped off there, and the

JUST ANOTHER LONELY KNIGHT

second a month later here in your world. Correct?”

I don't know why she's asking me when she obviously knows all the answers.

“Of course I do. I've read in your memory what transpired, but I'm trying to be conversational. We're supposed to be chatting, remember.” She flutters her fingers in the air. “I'm also trying to elucidate a complex topic as simply and succinctly as possible.”

Very kind of her, I'm sure.

“Not really. Glendel would probably be most irritated if he knew what I'm doing.”

Which is?

“Picking his pocket, for starters—magically, I mean. But as I've woven a psychic screen around my presence, he'll never notice. You're the only one who can sense me right now, Dee—and as long as you stay near my aura, your thoughts are shielded from prying male minds as well.” Her hand flutters again, and a scrap of pink and green floss materializes between her thumb and forefinger.

Yikes. It's the wish bracelet I lost in fairyland, and since I left it there, I never expected to see it again.

“Nor would you if it hadn't been for the other bracelet, the one that fell off *here*. It all boils down to the fact that two wishes were made on the same day by the same person. Once both were granted—one wish on the fey side of the veil and the other on the mortal side—their combined energies created a cross-dimensional pull, which is what opened a portal between the two worlds.”

JUST ANOTHER LONELY KNIGHT

Gee, I'm glad to finally have that explained. Mind you, I'd be even happier if I understood it.

"Don't worry, you'll understand much more in a minute."

That's what I'm afraid of.

Smiling, Morgan dangles the pink and green threads under my nose. "Glendel must have found this on the fey side and followed the residue of its magic trail straight to you. He intends to shut the portal, I presume, but he'll require the remains of the other wish bracelet to do that. A red and black one, right? Where is it, Dee?"

In my tent, tucked into a side pocket of my purse as a keepsake, but for some reason I don't want to tell her this. Of course, it makes no difference what I want. The moment I think the thought, she pulls it out of my mind. And the next instant a bedraggled twist of crimson and black appears in her other hand.

"Thank you," she says sweetly, and knots the two bracelets together into a single strand. "As the first step in closing the portal, Glendel would have needed you to tie them thus, since you're the one who originally activated their magic. But since *I'm* the one who put the magic into them in the first place, it works equally well if I do it. Now all that remains is to carry them back through the veil and dispose of them. That will both close and *lock* the door, as it were—with Glendel trapped on this side, unfortunately, but better him than me."

What?

Alarm bells go off in my head. In a sudden burst of panic, I find my voice. And it sounds like an air raid siren. "Wait a

JUST ANOTHER LONELY KNIGHT

minute—you can't leave him here!"

Morgan winces at my shrill tone. Almost sad her eyes appear as she stares at me.

"I'm sorry, Dee, but it has to be this way. For centuries I've been trapped in the mortal world. I was banished from the fey realms long, lonely ages ago, and as Sir Glendel is a Gate Guardian, he's not permitted to allow me back in. My only chance to return is to slip through an accidental, unmonitored portal such as this one. But I must do it quietly and alone. I hope you understand, my dear."

With that, she vanishes. Poof. Nothing left of her but a faint, lingering scent of roses, and a slight, silvery shimmer in the air before me.

Shit.

I do understand...sort of.

But I doubt Glenn or Wolfred will. I think I'm in big trouble.

Several days later I know I am.

It's the seventh afternoon, the midway mark of the High Plains Summer Ren Faire, and festivities are in full swing. The sun is shining, the crowd is thronging, and my life is going to hell in a handbasket. What I'd half wished for has happened, and I don't like it. Wolfred has vacated my head—but too much of the rest of me with it. He's barely speaking to me, while Glenn seems unable to shut up.

He seems, in fact, to have moved in with us.

Well, okay, I invited him to stay. Probably why Wolfred's acting pissed at me, huh? But what choice did I have?

JUST ANOTHER LONELY KNIGHT

Due to Morgan's magical machinations, and the overall complexities of dimensional travel—a very tricky business, apparently—Glenn is marooned here. I don't even pretend to grasp the metaphysics involved, but somehow when Morgan stole Glenn's return route home, she also transferred to him the curse that had banished her to this world. And since I aided her—albeit unknowingly—I feel partly responsible for his predicament.

Hell, common decency obligates me to help him if I can. Let's face it, for all intents and purposes, Glenn is currently an "illegal alien"—not unlike Wolfred. However, as I live on the road, moving from craft show to craft show, I'm able to fly under the bureaucratic radar, so to speak. I can offer him a temporary refuge at least, provide him with a cover to use while he figures out what to do.

For starters I've registered him as one of my party for this event, so he's legal as far as the faire wards are concerned. This means, of course, I'm now running interference for not only a medieval knight, but also a displaced fey-kin Gate Guardian. No wonder I've been eating aspirin like candy.

On the bright side, my handcrafted jewelry business is booming. Given that my clientele is predominately female, having a couple of super sexy guys in tights and tunics decorating my booth is proving to be quite a draw...even if it's playing fast and loose with my blood pressure. Because of the emotional strain of our odd triad, I'm lusting in silent agony along with the rest of the ladies.

Wolfred is heartbreakingly handsome in the blue costume I

JUST ANOTHER LONELY KNIGHT

bought him for this gig. He already had his own authentic historical garb, but it's so authentic I feared it might attract a bit *too* much attention. Besides which, his mail shirt would have been murder in this heat. I packed it away and re-outfitted him.

Glenn did the same for himself. With a snap of his fingers, he can change his clothes into whatever he wants, and his immortal body is impervious to outside temperature so he can focus on fashion without caring a fig for comfort. He's comfortable regardless, he claims, neither sweats in summer nor shivers in winter. Yesterday he paraded about looking like Legolas from *Lord of the Rings*. Today, in black, white, and scarlet, he looks like the Knave of Hearts—and is acting the role to the hilt.

From the corner of my eye, I watch him as he sidles up to a plump, elderly matron who's dressed as a sixteenth century Spanish noblewoman. A browser if ever I've seen one. She's been perusing my display for twenty minutes, but I'd bet my boobs she's not buying.

"I'll take that bet," Glenn murmurs.

Uh-oh...

"I beg your pardon, were you talking to me?" The woman flashes him a startled but hopeful glance.

"Absolutely." He gives her a smile that sends a visible quiver through her. "I was just saying that I'll bet this"—he indicates an intricate silver chain embellished with rose quartz and Austrian crystal—"would be perfect on you. So feminine, so lovely...a treasure for a treasure."

JUST ANOTHER LONELY KNIGHT

The *señora's* jaw drops—and not because of the necklace, I'm sure, though it is one of my more elegant designs.

“You think?” she squeaks.

“I *know*,” he answers, making the two words sound like an indecent proposition. His gaze sizzles with sin as he stares into her eyes. “And I never, ever lie to beautiful women.”

“Oh my...” Her breath wheezes out in a ragged exhale and a deep pink stains her from collarbone to forehead. I do believe she's just orgasmed. All a flutter, she checks the chain's price tag—seventy dollars, sales tax included and no extra charge for sexual thrills.

“I'll take it,” she rasps, then fumbles in her purse and pulls out a wad of bills. With shaking hands, she peels off four twenties and slaps them into my palm. “Keep the change, dear. It's still a bargain at the price.”

“Don't bother to wrap it,” Glenn tells me. “She'll wear it. So I can admire it on her.”

“Oh my...” She stands breathless and blushing while he fastens the chain around her neck.

“Delicious,” he declares.

I think she has another orgasm.

“Thank you,” she chokes out, and stumbles off into the crowd.

A grin tugs at the corners of my mouth, but I bite it back and glower at Glenn. “You ought to be ashamed of yourself. At her age, you could have given her a coronary.”

“Bull. It's good for her circulation, gets the old pulse pumping.” He chuckles. “And *you* owe me something, I

JUST ANOTHER LONELY KNIGHT

believe.”

My own pulse speeds tempo as his gaze fastens on my chest. He licks his lips, and my nipples—traitorous things—pucker as though to say, *c'mon and collect!* I hate myself.

With something between a sigh and a snort, Wolfred pulls upright off the packing crate he's been perched on and stalks past us, giving me but a single, sideways glance. “I'm for the games field. Mayhap there'll be some swordplay I can join. I could do with a bit of manly sport.”

“Me, too,” Glenn mutters, although I suspect he's contemplating a different kind of swordplay.

Through lowered lashes I study him while he studies Wolfred's broad, retreating back. I recognize his dilemma because it's mine also. He's torn between two desires. And, God help me, so am I.

Two knights and one lady...

Glenn camps in the van at night, leaving Wolfred and me the tent—not that we've been getting much fun out of it. As a knight, Glenn understands the rules of chivalry and courtly etiquette, and can practice them, I've discovered, when push comes to shove. But he's interested in more. Oh, yes. With innuendos and glances he flirts incorrigibly with me *and* Wolfred. I can't tell which of us he wants the most. I don't think he can decide either.

Me, I know I want Wolfred, but am finding myself increasingly—and shamefully—attracted to Glenn as well. While Wolfred, silent and sullen, is disgusted with the whole sordid situation, I'm afraid. He's such a straight shooter.

JUST ANOTHER LONELY KNIGHT

A ridiculous yet tragic triangle we make. My heart hurts for all of us. But of the three, I ache the most for Glenn at this instant. Wolfred and I *are* a couple, despite the current friction between us. Glenn is the odd man out anyway you slice it, and he feels the cut. I'm no telepath, but I can intuit that much. It shouldn't bother me, but it does.

Hot longing smolders deep in his eyes—the raw heat of carnal hunger made beautiful by just a hint of something more. Something poignant. I sense passion laced with pathos. For all his scorching sensuality, an age-old wisdom glows below his surface, and I'm reminded that Glenn is, first and foremost, an Eternal Being.

It's beyond beguiling, bigger than awesome. Sharp chills knife through me just skirting the edge of that thought.

I believe in an eternal spirit, and so I believe at least a part of us continues on indefinitely—infinity—that we're all immortal in a way. But it's different for Glenn, isn't it? I wonder what it's like to live unending and unchanging in the same body, to see worlds come and go, dimensions shift and evolve, and know you'll always be...as you are.

"Lonely," he answers without meeting my gaze. "Forever is a lonely place, Lady Dee. Be thankful you needn't go there."

A wry tilt to his lips, he peers around at the motley colored, bustling faire. I've seen similar looks on the faces of grandparents watching small children at play, but on Sir Glendel Goodfellow the expression takes on an added, deeper meaning. He appears charmed, bemused, and sorrowed all in

JUST ANOTHER LONELY KNIGHT

one wistful breath.

“Lord, what fools these mortals be,” he recites softly.

I recognize the line. It’s from Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, and is delivered in the play by the roguish Puck, also known as Robin Goodfellow.

“Any relation of yours?” I tease, hoping to lighten the mood. I think Glenn appreciates my effort even if it doesn’t quite succeed.

“Only a *distant* cousin,” he replies with huffy, mock indignation.

Slowly, he turns to face me, and for a long moment we do nothing but stare in pregnant silence into each other’s eyes. I have no idea what he’s seeing, but I’m gazing at a gut wrenchingly gorgeous man. A magical and everlasting man, perhaps, but one I could fall head over heels in love with had I not already pledged my heart to someone else.

“Poor, foolish child,” he whispers. “What makes you think you need to choose? It’s not as though I’m seeking to steal you from Wolfred. My stay with you is but an interlude, so why not take advantage of it while you can? You *could* have both of us for the time I’m here. Or hasn’t that occurred to you?”

Like Wolfred would ever go for that? Hah!

Still, it has occurred to me—as Glenn knows darn well since he reads my thoughts like a stockbroker keeping tabs on the market reports, and my thoughts are often less than lily white. I have the mind of a slut, actually.

On top of which, Wolfred and I haven’t made love since

JUST ANOTHER LONELY KNIGHT

Glenn's arrival—six nights now that feel like decades to my overactive and underfed libido. I'm horny as hell and crammed in close quarters with two very different but very tempting males. It's excruciating. How can I *not* fantasize us all crammed together even closer?

But fantasy is the key word here. Thinking something doesn't mean I'll do it. Wolfred and I beat the odds of time and space to find each other. Our love is a rare and precious thing, and I intend to keep it that way. Whatever's gone wrong between us is only temporary. I *must* believe that. We'll get past it, fix it—provided I don't do something stupid to make things worse. I won't jeopardize my beautiful bird in the hand by chasing after some impossible two in the bush.

“You act like loving me would take something away from him. Is human love so limited then?” Glenn leans forward and braces his palms on the display table between us, which brings his face near to mine. Too near. I back up a step.

Uh-uh. I refuse to fall into this logic trap. The issue isn't limiting love but *sanctifying* it through fidelity—an especially important virtue to my iron-willed Wolfred with his old world ideals.

“Is monogamy such an alien concept to you?” I counter. “Is fey love so promiscuous?”

“Fey-kin,” he corrects. “And I prefer the term *expansive* to promiscuous.”

How special.

This is the great thing about Glenn, though—and I'm grateful to him for it, really I am. You see, I can never

JUST ANOTHER LONELY KNIGHT

sympathize with him too deeply or for too long. Because he has a wonderful way of shredding my last nerve!

Bolstered by pique, I lean forward, too, and plant my hands opposite his, meet him nose to nose. “Well, if we’re going to play semantics, I prefer *exclusive* to limited.”

So there.

I expect another sarcastic retort. I get a soft, soulful look instead, a tender tone that sucks all the angry wind out of my sails.

“No one’s playing, sweetheart. Believe it or not, I’m trying to help you and Sir Wolfred before your *exclusiveness* limits you both into nothing. You two have some serious communication problems, I’m afraid. Your bird hasn’t been in your hand or your bush recently, has he?”

No, damn it, and I’m uncertain why. Wolfred knows I love him, knows I can’t help my attraction to “fey charms,” as he put it. And he *should* know, I’d never act on those feelings. He seemed to find my fluster amusing at first. I thought he understood. Didn’t he say he forgave me for it? Why is he making this situation so much more difficult than it has to be?

“Perhaps it’s himself he needs to forgive,” Glenn whispers.

Leaving me with that cryptic comment, he turns and melts into the costumed crowd.

Terrific. Now both my illegal aliens—neither of whom own any ID beyond their vendor badges—have escaped my protective eye, and I’m stuck here manning my booth, out of range if they need help. Wolfred is on the games field, for godssake—where the battles are mock, but not always the

JUST ANOTHER LONELY KNIGHT

injuries. What if there's an accident and he gets rushed to the hospital? Without me.

My stomach knots.

On his own, Wolfred would be mystified by the most commonplace equipment, like X-ray machines and hypodermics. That's bound to raise a few eyebrows. They might even think he was delusional. He could end up in a mental ward—and that's one of the prettier scenarios. If they decided he was lucid...

I think I'm going to be sick.

I check my watch. Hmm, not quite five. The faire won't close to the public for another few hours yet, and I need all the sales I can snag with not only myself but now Wolfred to support—and Glenn—to say nothing of the van. Winnie the Wonder Tank, as I call my old VW, gets good mileage, but not good enough to offset the rising cost of fuel. It's becoming harder and harder to earn a decent living on the road.

Oh hell, who am I kidding? I've never earned much in this profession. Financially, I've been struggling for years. In other words, missing a few sales today isn't going to make or break me.

With a speed born of long practice, I clear off my display table—which sits under a striped awning in front of the matching, medieval-style tent—then lock my stock in Winnie, who's hiding back in the trees behind said tent, and tromp off to lasso and corral a couple of wayward knights. En route, I try not to worry, but I do, especially about Wolfred.

He's dealing with a lot, after all—besides our flirtatious

JUST ANOTHER LONELY KNIGHT

fey-kin, I mean. Wolfred has leapt centuries, forfeited a place at King Arthur's fabled Round Table to be with me. He says he has no regrets, and I believe him—I think—but it can't be easy for him adjusting to modern life. From his perspective, the technology alone must boggle the brain.

I suspect some of the new social structures are an even bigger stretch for him. Wolfred comes from an era when men gave the orders and women obeyed. Yet in his and my relationship I've been calling the shots so far. I *have* to. He's a stranger in a strange land, and I'm his guide.

It's also part of my nature. My mom was a professional athlete, and I'm a lot like her—tall, strong, and kick-ass. "Brave and bold as a man," Wolfred once called me. He meant it as a compliment, but I'm wondering if he's changed his mind on that. Since he's joined me, I've been afraid to let him out of my sight for even an hour. I cluck over him like an anxious mother hen. For a grown man, that's gotta be grating on the nerves.

Y' know, the more I consider this, the more I realize it's not just Glenn who's created the tension. It's me. Yes, I have reason to worry about Wolfred's safety. But perhaps I'm overdoing it a tad? His medieval male ego must be bruised to the bone.

And here I am riding herd on him again. With hardly a thought I've turned toward the games field where those so inclined don protective padding or armor and hack at each other with blunted blades. I took part in one of the melees myself last year, but after I whipped the tar out of a pair of

JUST ANOTHER LONELY KNIGHT

ninth century Vikings, no one else would come near me. I did mention I'm kinda kick-ass, right?

For Wolfred's sake, however, I've been trying to be a bit more feminine of late—and it hasn't been easy. In lieu of the Robin Hood costume I usually wear for Ren Faires, I've burdened myself with ruffled skirts, a puffy sleeved peasant blouse, and front-laced bodice. I was aiming for sort of an Elizabethan milkmaid look, but I think I hit Bawdy Tavern Wench instead.

I also think I'd better swallow my fears and trust my worrisome wards to take care of themselves for the moment. If my fussing over Wolfred has damaged his ego, I won't fix it by doing more of the same. He and Glenn will be okay.

Probably.

And if I keep telling myself that, maybe, eventually, I'll believe it.

My step slows as I come in sight of the games field, a trampled expanse of earth about the size of two tennis courts with a large pavilion at the far end where the players can cool their heels and guzzle ice water or lemonade between bouts, courtesy of the faire. An eclectic crew of combatants are whooping it up in the fighting area. Most Ren Faires span several centuries and multiple cultures, and this one is no exception.

I see Huns and Highlanders, knights in plumed helmets...even a couple of Saracens in black robes. What I don't see is Wolfred.

Shit.

JUST ANOTHER LONELY KNIGHT

I beat back a cold rush of panic. There's no cause for alarm. He's probably in the drinks pavilion. Yeah, that's it. I could make sure, of course, by walking around the field and peeking into the pavilion, but then he might see me. And know I was checking up on him. Again.

I heave a resigned sigh.

Okay, if I'm going to loosen the apron strings, I have to start now. Praying I'm not making a mistake, I glance at my watch, then force my feet back the way I came. Fast. It's five-forty. With a little hustle, I can be set up once more by six. Another two hours or better of sales, which will help soothe my financial fears if none of the others.

I pause for a breath of clean, woodsy air when I reach the elms that stand sentry at my end of the faire. Farther inward, the trees are dense, creating the illusion of "forest," but up near the booth spaces, they thin out enough for those of us stationed here to park between them, provided we hide our vehicles from the public eye. We are trying to present a medieval front, after all.

Winnie is old, but not quite that old, so I've tossed a large, green tarp over her. I'm about to lift the tarp, in preparation for hauling out my stock, when something halts me. Something suspicious. A heavy crunching of twigs mixed with muffled murmurs, low grunts and gasps.

What the...

The noise comes from the foresty section, where the elms in their summer foliage, with leafy boughs growing almost to the ground, form a thick, green wall. Too thick for my vision

JUST ANOTHER LONELY KNIGHT

to penetrate from where I'm standing. But I *have* to see.

In silent stealth, I inch closer. My chest constricts with each tiny, tentative step forward, and a sudden sick feeling sits in the pit of my stomach. I'm not sure I really want to discover the source of the sounds, but they draw me like a magnet.

A magical *come hither*?

No, of course not. I'm sneaking a peek for safety's sake, my peace of mind. There is a reason why the faire administrators instigated the "No Unregistered Personnel After Dark" rule and wardens patrol the grounds to enforce it.

Several summers ago, before I started vending here, a young girl was beaten and raped in this deceptively serene spot. The crime happened at night—which it isn't now—but, hey, bad things happen in daylight, too.

I tell myself it's my duty to make sure all's well behind the trees. I even try to believe it. I'm an idiot. Deep down inside, I already know what I'm going to find, and it's no crime. Just very confusing.

My breath stops along with my steps as I reach a small break in the leafy wall and peer through it. This must be how Medusa's victims felt when they were turned to stone. It's a wonder I'm not blinded on the spot. Mortal eyes aren't meant for such fierce beauty.

I'm transfixed, paralyzed by the sight of two naked figures lying face to face on their sides, on a tumble of shed clothes, in the center of a small clearing. Their legs twine as their mouths meld together in a kiss. Hands rove—touching, stroking—exploring divinely sculpted torsos. Two glorious

JUST ANOTHER LONELY KNIGHT

males, one golden as an angel, the other devil-dark. Heaven and hell in one lovers' embrace.

Their heaven, my hell.

The dark one is Glenn—just as I expected, just as I feared. I thought I recognized the husky timbre of his voice. But I don't know what to think now. I can't think! The reasoning part of my brain seems to have shut off. I'm nothing but a sensory sponge soaking up the sound and sight and scent, the lush physical feel of the scene.

I almost taste their kiss on my tongue—hot and sweet like burnt sugar, more intoxicating than liquor. A bottomless, boiling sea of a kiss. I know because I've drowned in many similar ones.

Wolfred's kisses.

Yes, that's my knight there with Glenn. I thought I recognized his voice, too, but I didn't believe my ears. I'm not sure I believe my eyes either, but I must. How ironic to consider that, for Wolfred's sake, I've refused all Glenn's advances, and now Wolfred is the one who succumbs.

Well, he did once say "fey charms be difficult for we mortals to resist." I just didn't realize he included himself in the "we." I never guessed his lusts included other males, period. I ought to feel startled at least, if not downright betrayed.

But, somehow, I can't feel anything beyond the burn of the passion play enacted before me. Mesmerized, I watch it unfold. On some far distant, cloudy plain of consciousness I wonder why they don't notice my presence. Given their

JUST ANOTHER LONELY KNIGHT

telepathic abilities, shouldn't they sense my brain waves if nothing else? Or are they too engrossed in their lovemaking? God knows I am.

Desire rolls off them in waves of tangible heat, while I stand like a column of dry ice, frozen yet smoking hot, my feet glued to the ground—pinned, planted, rooted in place like the trees around me. I've always admired the male form on an artistic level as well as sexual, and to see two such exquisite examples in such close contact...

It's almost too beautiful to bear.

Late afternoon summer sunlight filters through the leaves, bathing both bodies in a dappled gold glow. I hear the heavy rasp of their breathing, see the ripple of muscles as they kiss and clutch. With them sprawled out on their sides, heads pointing away and their feet toward me, I also have a juicy view of two magnificent, matching erections until Glenn hooks a leg over Wolfred's thigh, grinding their groins together.

He digs a hand between them, opening just enough space for me to see him squeezing both hard cocks lengthwise in one firm, skilled grip. My cunt clenches in spastic response. My fingers itch and my mouth waters. Talk about making fire by rubbing two sticks together. What I wouldn't give for such a handful. I'm eaten with envy.

I wish I *were* being eaten. And returning the favor. Their bodies strain closer, and a rhythmic rocking begins, pelvis pushing pelvis, chest rasping chest. The glow about them takes on a mystical quality, like a halo. The very air seems to

JUST ANOTHER LONELY KNIGHT

shimmer with impending orgasm. I'm one giant, horny ache. Oh, to just jump on top of them. I've never been much for spectator sports. I want to be part of the action!

But I don't dare. I dread being discovered. Quite a quandary because sooner or later they will know I've been spying. There's no way I'll be able to hide it; they'll read it in my mind. I doubt Sir Glenn the Expansive will care. Hell, he'll probably be sorry I don't have a camera handy to take pictures.

But Wolfred?

He's an enigmatic blend of machismo and tenderness, and he has a difficult time reconciling the two. Wolfred doesn't see many gray tones in life. To him an action is black or white, wrong or right, and the standards he sets for himself are sky-high. People like that don't forgive themselves easily, and when they fall from grace, they crash hard. To be caught *in flagrante delicto*—with another man no less—will mortify him, I'm afraid.

His male ego has already taken a beating, and not just from my fussing over him. The problem dates back to Camelot, where his skill in the tournaments won him a place at the Round Table, then his soft streak made him feel like a wimp. He digs swordplay and jousting as a game, but real war sickens him.

One could wonder why a pacifist wanted to be a knight at all. I thought it was because of the tourneys. He's more *athlete* than warrior. But I see an added motive now—the need to prove his masculinity. No one simply wakes up one day and

JUST ANOTHER LONELY KNIGHT

decides they're bi, right? Wulfred has probably been fighting this urge since puberty. All week he's ignored Glenn's teasing, with an almost too deliberate display of disinterest. I'll bet he finds his desire for other men as disgraceful as he once did his pacifism and lycanthropy.

Wulfred really didn't like himself very much when we first met. It took a strong dose of unconditional love—letting him know I accepted him completely—to fix that. Or so I thought. It appears we may have one last wrinkle to iron out of his self-image.

A silent chuckle vibrates between my ears.

Shit. I've been spotted.

::But only by me, so relax. I figured I'd better warn you that you're on the wrong path. Wulfred's more worried about you than himself. He's been afraid to tell you he practiced homosexuality—for years—and was comfortable with it. A lot of King Arthur's knights were gay, did you know that? Wulfred gained his seat at the Round Table by more than one kind of swordplay.::

He *what*? He can't be gay! Bi, maybe. But he makes love with me, for godssake—damn good love, the kind no man could fake—and I'm a woman!

::Obviously. But he didn't realize he was bi until you. None of the Camelot ladies stirred his interest. He'd expected to marry, of course—eventually. For appearances' sake, as well as political alliances, Arthur chose brides for his knights regardless of their sexual preferences. When the time came, Sir Wulfred would have treated a wife with respect and

JUST ANOTHER LONELY KNIGHT

gentleness as befitted his inbred chivalry. He'd have done his duty—for king and country—but he didn't expect to enjoy it. You're the only woman he's ever loved,:: Glenn informs me.

::Just keep your brain energy at low volume, will you? I've blocked your presence from Wolfred, but he still might detect you if you continue the mental screams.::

I'm not screaming. I'm trying to think, damn it!

::Then try to think a little less emphatically.::

Easy for him to say.

I don't like this. I don't trust it. Why would a gay man want to switch sides? What if, after the novelty wears off, he decides to switch back? What if he already has? He *is* here with another man, after all.

::Not just any man, though. Me. I have persuasive powers beyond the norm.::

So I've noticed. But I've also noticed Wolfred hasn't been near me recently!

::Yeah, and it's partly your own fault. Among his other concerns, he's been exercising some brain-bending concentration in order to control his telepathy—to give you what he thought you wanted. You were bitching for some privacy, weren't you?::

Oh, sure, throw that in my face. I didn't mean this much privacy!

::Okay, that's it. You're forcing me to take drastic measures.::

I'm not forcing anyone to do anything! I—

Yikes! What happened?

JUST ANOTHER LONELY KNIGHT

::I'm showing you how the other half lives.::

King of understatement, isn't he? At this moment, I'm not sure which disturbs me more, the discovery that Wolfred is gay, or discovering gay tendencies within myself. Not lesbian lusts, but the longing of a male for a male. Suddenly I'm aware of sex from a brand new angle. My position has changed. *All* of me has changed. Without warning, it's *me* tangled up with Wolfred. I feel the press of his flesh, smell his warm, musky scent. I also feel my fingers wrapped around two meaty shafts.

And one of them seems to be mine.

Ye gods, I've grown a penis!

A big one, if that's any consolation, a real two-handed whopper of a dick.

::Thank you, but it's not yours, sweetheart. You're just sharing mine. Since you wouldn't calm down, I've temporarily tucked your consciousness inside me where I can better shield it from Wolfred.::

And where I'm experiencing all Glenn's physical feelings as though they were my own. What a weird, strange trip.

::Well, you wished to participate in the action, didn't you?::

I meant in my body.

::Don't worry, we're working our way up to that. But first, we need to talk.::

Talk? With a boner on? How?

I had no idea erections felt so...so demanding on the projective end. I don't want to discuss it. I want to *use* it. I

JUST ANOTHER LONELY KNIGHT

have an incredible urge to shove this power tool into something hot and wet. Wolfred's mouth...his ass...

::Stop that.:: Glenn grits my teeth. I mean his teeth... Our teeth? Whatever.

::No naughty visualizations. You'll make me come too fast,:: he complains.

Me, too, I presume, but I'm not complaining. I've often suspected men think with their privates. Now I know it for a fact because I'm doing the same thing. And this rod and reel says, *let's go fishin'!*

::You're acting like a boy with his first serious hard-on.::

This *is* my first hard-on. And I'm very serious about it. Whoa, baby! It feels like a stallion straining at the bit. Why can't we cut loose and gallop?

::Because you may be in the saddle with me, but I'm holding the reins.::

Frustrating but true. Glenn controls this body. I'm just a helpless passenger along for the ride, a tangled mass of steamy sensations and confused thoughts. In all honesty, I'm trying to avoid the latter by focusing on the first.

::Chicken.::

Cluck, cluck.

Of course I'm afraid to think. Never mind the shock of being a woman in a man's body. When one hangs around with fey-kin, one has to expect this sort of crap. Besides, it's temporary. Even if Glenn hadn't said so, I know it. I'll drive him crazy with kinky fantasies if he doesn't let me out soon.

::Now I'm afraid.::

JUST ANOTHER LONELY KNIGHT

Oh, hush.

The bigger, more permanent concern is being a woman in love with a gay man—one who's hidden his true sexual nature from me. Neither thought inspires much peace of mind, and what makes it worse is I've never fully understood why Wolfred loves me. *If* he loves me. I've never had much luck with love, period. In the romance race, my track record stinks. Most men find me either too much woman or not enough. Or both. I'm considered sexually demanding and unfeminine.

::That's their problem—and loss. Wolfred loves you for exactly who and what you are.::

Under the circumstances that's not much comfort. I haven't forgotten I was wearing my Robin Hood costume when Wolfred and I met, and he mistook me for a man at first. So he loves me *because* of the qualities I call kick-ass and others have dubbed “masculine”?

Why do I find so little solace in this?

::You know, sweetheart, you claim to worry about Wolfred's self-image, but it's yours that's lacking. Why are you so insecure? You're a strong, vibrant female who hasn't the vaguest clue how appealing she is. And Wolfred's just as blind. You're two idiot peas in a pod. Two tall, athletic blonds—two stubborn idealists with tough shells and tender cores. That's why you're in love. You're soul mates! It's Fate! Understand? By the dictates of Divine Plan and Cosmic Justice, if you weren't lovers you'd have to be twins!::

Wince.

I'm not sure I followed all of that—especially the fate

JUST ANOTHER LONELY KNIGHT

part—but I understand now what he meant before by “mental screams” because my mental ears are ringing. I think I’ve just been psychically yelled at.

::Yeah, well, I lost my temper. You have that effect on me.::

Ditto.

However, I fail to see what he’s angry about. If anyone has cause for upset, it’s yours truly. The love of my life is gay. And cheating on me. With a guy whose body I happen to be sharing—a body that’s so aroused it makes me almost approve of the cheating, makes me crave it.

Is this surrealistic, or what?

Wolfred leans into the embrace and rolls Glenn onto his back. Our back. I feel the scorch of my darling’s skin, his solid weight pressing me flat. Familiar feelings yet not—because I sense everything through the filter of Glenn’s flesh. I’m having sex with one man *through* another. It’s miles away from anything I’ve ever experienced before. Wild and weird but intensely erotic.

::It’s a little weird for me, too, now that you mention it. Usually when I make love with a woman, I’m in her, not the other way around. I wonder sometimes how I get myself into these situations.::

Him and me both.

How *did* he and Wolfred end up here? Being swept away in a spontaneous surge of passion I could forgive, maybe—certainly understand. It happens to me all the time. But I’m going to be crushed if I discover this tryst was premeditated,

JUST ANOTHER LONELY KNIGHT

that they deliberately left me alone at the booth to sneak off together.

::It was planned, but only by me, and for honorable motives.::

Hah, I'll just bet.

::No, I'm the one who bet. And you will be crushed—between us—if I've pegged things right. But first I'm priming the pump, so to speak, by collecting on a gentlemen's wager. After I left you this afternoon, I tracked Wolfred to the games field and beat him in a swordfight—fair and square, no magic.::

I don't believe it. Wolfred's a champion.

::So am I, and I've been a knight for millennia longer than he has. We fought one fast duel for high stakes. If I won, I got his...um, undivided attention for an hour.::

Wolfred bet himself? Good Lord...

::He didn't expect to lose. And what I offered in return was too tempting for him to refuse.::

Oy. I'm afraid to ask.

::Whether he won or lost, I promised to bow out of the picture, disappear from your lives. He's not blaming me for all the strain between you two, but he's sure I've aggravated it—and he may be right. He thought that with me gone, he'd have a better chance of saving your relationship, which is his top priority. If he'd won, I'd have left instantly. But since he didn't, I get a...goodbye kiss, shall we say, to speed me on my way.::

Ouch.

JUST ANOTHER LONELY KNIGHT

So, in essence, they fought that duel and made sacrifices—both of them—for me. If I had control over a pair of eyes right now, I think I'd be crying. I should be happy that, despite everything, Wolfred wants to save our relationship—even though I can't quite grasp why he does. I *am* happy. But I'm ashamed of myself for thinking the worst of him, doubting him.

Glenn's right. I'm too insecure. I've been left so many times by so many men, I look for reasons to be left again. I really have to get past that. Honestly, do I need to know why Wolfred loves me? Isn't the love itself enough? Maybe the answer truly is as simple as being *soul mates*. Wolfred and I were born centuries apart on opposite sides of an ocean. If neither time nor space could keep us from finding one another, how can a little thing like gender stand in our way?

Well, okay, maybe it's not *that* little a thing. But it should be. If two spirits were made to be together, destined for it—perhaps when the universe was new and all the souls that ever were, or ever will be, hatched out of one incomprehensible, infinite cosmic egg (there's a thought!)—does it matter if one spirit ends up in the body of a gay male and the other...um, doesn't?

::Not in the slightest. And I'm so glad you finally realize that.::

So am I. But I'm not as happy as I should be, and Glenn's intrusion on my thoughts reminds me why. I'm an awful person. Considering all I have with Wolfred, I've no reason or right to even consider wanting more. Call me ungrateful, call

JUST ANOTHER LONELY KNIGHT

me wrong, call me stupid...

Or maybe just call me expansive.

Whatever I am, I find myself dreading the coming goodbye. I knew Glenn would be leaving. Sometime. I just didn't think sometime would happen so soon. I guess I didn't want to think about it. God, I'm going to miss him.

::Likewise, Lady Dee. I'll not soon forget you or your good knight. Which is exactly why I've forced certain issues this afternoon. It's high time I move on.::

To where? He can't return to his own realm.

::Not yet. But I'll find a way home someday. Until then I need to steer clear of...extended involvements. Your folklore is filled with warnings for humans who dare to dally with fey creatures, but in reality such affairs are more dangerous for my kind.::

Damn. I don't know what Glenn is talking about, but I know I don't like it.

::Neither do I, but it's nothing I can't handle. I've been taking care of myself for a long time—for forever—and I knew the risks when I entered this world. I'm dealing with things as I must.::

I wonder. Somehow he doesn't sound entirely sure about that.

An odd apprehension prickles my consciousness, as though a chill breeze just blew across my soul. This must be the sort of sensation my mother, who was as psychic as she was athletic, meant when she said she felt someone walking on her grave.

JUST ANOTHER LONELY KNIGHT

::Relax, sweetheart. Whatever worries there are, they're not yours.:: Glenn's mind wraps around mine, calming me like a drug—an intangible kind of cuddle that feels warmer than a physical hug. *::All you need to know is that I'm giving you and Wolfred something very precious as a farewell gift.::*

What?

::Each other.::

With that, he pushes me out of his head.

Gasp!

I slam back into my body—dizzy and disoriented, breathless and off balanced—so startled I lose my footing and topple forward through the trees. Timber! In a shower of torn leaves, I crash into the center of a bonfire.

Wolfred and Glenn.

Hot, heavy ecstasy fore and aft. Strong hands clutch at me, tearing off my clothes like tissue paper, and legs twist with mine. Two muscular torsos press close. I'm on my side, squashed between them, caught coming and going, trapped in a tangle of manflesh.

I'm not complaining, but I'm confused. I swear it's as though they were waiting for me, expecting me—not just Glenn but both of them. How? Wolfred didn't know I was here until I fell on top of him.

::Aye, but I've fast reflexes,:: he answers in thought as his lips land on mine. *::And I'm not one to let such an opportunity slip through my grasp.::*

Or me with it, apparently. Yep, after a week of withdrawal, he's invaded my mind once more.

JUST ANOTHER LONELY KNIGHT

Thank God.

It's only now that I realize I've missed our mental contact even more than the physical. Never again will I complain about the lack of privacy. I'm so relieved to have him back in my head, I hardly care if he's lying. And I know he is. His reflexes aren't *that* fast.

"Actually, I'm the one who lied," Glenn murmurs into the soft spot below my ear. He reaches around me to grip Wolfred's biceps, locking us all tighter together while nuzzling and nipping my neck between words.

"I didn't block your consciousness from Wolfred, just his ability to respond to you in any way. I had to. He was afraid to confess his gay history—afraid you'd no longer believe his love if you knew. But the guilt of keeping it secret was eating him alive, and you weren't faring much better with your own fears. I was half tempted to turn you both into newts and shut you in a shoebox until you came to your senses. But, honestly, where would have been the fun in that? Instead, I let you find him with me—then let him see that, even though you did panic briefly, your love is still unconditional. Clever, don't you think?"

::Mayhap. But I was sore discomfited for a bit. 'Twas like he stuffed a gag in my mouth,:: Wolfred adds silently, since the mouth in question is busy kissing the starch out of me. *::I'd have broken his nose for it had I not known you were in him and wouldst feel the blow, too.::*

"I know. Why do you think I put her in me?" Glenn's chuckle vibrates against my spine. "My kind of immortality

JUST ANOTHER LONELY KNIGHT

doesn't guard me from wounds or the pain they cause. It just means my cells regenerate quickly if I am injured. Nothing can kill me. Well...almost nothing."

Huh? Is he serious?

"Yes, but we're not here to discuss my Achilles heel, so forget I mentioned it."

Not a chance.

I drag out of Wolfred's kiss and flatten my palms on his chest, pushing back enough to give me the space to wriggle around and face Glenn. I'm shocked. What could possibly destroy someone of his powers? I suppose I've been viewing him in rather a godlike light.

"I'm flattered. But I'm no god, sweetheart. Although most seem to find my lovemaking quite divine." With another chuckle, he rolls onto his back, hauling me on top of him. "For you and Wolfred, however, it'll be even better. It'll be *magic*."

As though the word itself is a spell, all speech halts, vocal and telepathic, and *sex* rolls in like a riptide, swamping senses, drowning doubt. No more questions asked or answered. No thoughts beyond physical need. No communication but strokes and squeezes, skin rubbing skin, hands searching for treasure. The language of touch, sultry and smooth. It spreads over me like melted butter, and I dissolve into creamy ecstasy beneath its flow.

Magic, indeed. I'm bewitched, but not the least bothered or bewildered by it. I feel like I was made for this moment.

A dizzy dance begins, a three-way tumble of sinuous, sensuous moves led by the rhythms of pounding pulses and

JUST ANOTHER LONELY KNIGHT

panting breath. I'm swept into a torrid tango. Swept out to sea in giddy waves of passion. I can barely tell whose hands are whose. Or who belongs to which arms and legs and lips. It doesn't seem to matter. We all belong together.

Glenn kisses me.

Wolfred kisses Glenn.

I kiss Wolfred, and the cycle speeds tempo. We're a wild whirl of sizzle, all probing tongues and juicy caresses. A round-robin of mouth on mouth. Mouths on chests, on bellies, on backs. Mouths moving lower...

Hot.

Wet.

Hungry.

I know where this is leading. "A feast of peonies" I once heard it called, but that was in relation to a guy with a couple of girls, so a *feast of pussy* might have been more appropriate, if less poetic. In this instance we could perhaps dub it a *feast of penis*, since my pussy is outnumbered two to one.

I adore those odds, by the way.

My temperature spikes as callused palms slide up the inside of my thighs and pry my legs apart. A wicked tongue—Wolfred's, I recognize it—spears me up the center, parts me and dives deep into my slit. *Oooh, yeah*. I adore this, too. He's spurred on, I presume, by the fact that Glenn is eating him.

Well, hell, where's my dinner?

Ah, it's moving into position right now as Glenn shifts slightly to angle his whopper closer to my face. Yum. I've heard there are some women who don't like giving head, but I

JUST ANOTHER LONELY KNIGHT

don't believe it. Roast cock is my favorite meat, the only dish I can cook and eat at the same time. It goes into my mouth raw, but comes out done to a turn, fully basted, and ready to be drenched in gravy. Really. I'm very good at this.

Glenn's not complaining, at any rate. He groans with pleasure as I deep throat him. Wolfred answers with a feral growl that vibrates against my nether lips, sending electric shivers through me.

::Uh-oh,:: Glenn mind-talks. ::I know what that means.::

So do I. Sexual excitement often rouses Wolfred's inner beast, and in the heat of the moment, he doesn't always leash it in. He knows I can handle a hard fuck. He knows I like it.

He's going to shift!

I am so in trouble.

The problem is we're not exactly fucking. Yet. It's his mouth, not his cock, that's connected to my cunt. And with his beast comes a set of lethal fangs. Ouch.

I release Glenn—reluctantly but fast—and roll free of our tangle just as Wolfred rears back on his haunches. He shimmers with a golden glow for an instant, then sprouts fur, claws...and the fearsome fangs. Now he looks something like actor Lon Chaney, Jr. in his classic Wolfman role.

"I love it when he does that." Sprawled on his side on the pile of our clothes, Glenn props up on an elbow for a better view. Arousal rises off him like steam. "While he was in my realm he practiced his shifting a lot to master the ability. I never got tired of watching."

I must admit I get a charge out of it, too. Wolfred's so

JUST ANOTHER LONELY KNIGHT

wonderfully savage in this state, so full of raw, primitive force. I suppose most people would be terrified of him, but that's their loss. He still has a muscular man's body under the fur, and he walks upright. Once you get used to it, his wolfman persona is way sexy.

"Agreed." Glenn's gaze slants from Wolfred to where I'm sitting a scant few feet away. "So what are we going to do about it? Put him in the middle? Or one of us?"

Decisions, decisions.

Except I think Glenn has already chosen. He's wearing *that* grin—and nothing else, of course. Which means I haven't a chance. Not that I ever did, I realize now. With merciless intent he slides across our makeshift bed toward me—presses me onto my back with no more than a hot, heavy stare. Then he follows it with the weight of his body. Dark and delicious, he sinks forward and pins me flat, chest to chest, belly to belly. All warm, smooth skin and hard man.

All enchantment.

There's something besides sex happening here. What, I can't guess, yet I see untold mystery and promise in his eyes. He's got his mojo working, to quote an old blues tune. I'm captured and captivated.

As he positions himself to enter me, a low growl rumbles out of Wolfred. A shadow falls over us, then a powerful, furred form leans in and kneels close behind Glenn, between his thighs, which are between my legs. Which makes me feel for a moment like we're Russian dolls, those little figures that nest one inside the other. How beautifully we fit together. It's

JUST ANOTHER LONELY KNIGHT

seems perfect.

“It gets better,” Glenn whispers. “Wait.”

He glances over his shoulder at Wolfred. “You, too.”

Then he raises off me a fraction to reach into the air with his left hand. I mean really *into* the air. I blink in surprise as his hand disappears for a second and returns holding a tube of...

Lube?

Oh. Right. They do need that, I suppose.

Cough.

Glenn’s lips curl into a tiny tease of a grin as he thumbs open the pop-up cap of the tube and reaches behind himself to apply it. “You’re blushing like a virgin, Lady Dee.”

Yeah, amazing, huh? I’ve never been the blushing virgin type, not even when I was a virgin. It’s just that suddenly I feel like one, timid and uncertain but thrumming with anticipation.

Even more amazing I sense a sudden odd tension in Glenn. He’s covering it well, but he’s nervous, too. I can smell it seeping out of his pores, almost like sweat, a sharp, bitter tang of trepidation mixed with the pungent musk of his arousal. For the record, Glenn doesn’t sweat the way humans do, but if he did, I suspect he’d be soaked right now. He smells like a man who’s daring fate. And knows it.

Wow.

That, more than anything, hits home to me the immensity of this situation. It’s more than sex, maybe more than magic. We’re sailing into uncharted waters. To find rich, new

JUST ANOTHER LONELY KNIGHT

lands...or fall off the edge of the earth? I don't think even Glenn knows for sure, and he's captaining the ship.

It's scary and grand at the same time.

"That's how I feel about Wolfred's dick," Glenn drawls.

He should talk. With one silken thrust and no warning, he penetrates me, pushes in nearly to the hilt. And he has a lot to push. Did I mention something about immensity? I'm filled with it now. He's as big as Wolfred, which sorta says it all since I don't think they come any bigger.

Someone groans. Me. The throaty sound mingles in harmony with Wolfred's growls, and the reason for our lusty chorus is that Wolfred has just speared Glenn. I know this because the force of his entry shoves Glenn into me deeper yet, nails my hips to the ground. All things considered, I'd expect Glenn to join the song, too, but he's gone oddly silent.

Concentrating? On what?

He covers me like a blanket, an electric one set on high heat, his face buried in the side of my neck. He almost vibrates. I grip his shoulders and feel the pulse of power within him, feel tendrils of energy curl out and around us like the threads of a cocoon. He's lost inside himself, doing something on an internal level, something incredible. I wish I knew for what purpose and why.

So does Wolfred, I sense. I've never seen his beast so reverent, so controlled. Often he mind-talks to me in his animalistic state, but not now. I suspect he doesn't know what to say, doesn't dare make any savage move that might rip the intangible fibers of the mystical web being spun. He smoothes

JUST ANOTHER LONELY KNIGHT

his palms up Glenn's back, taking care not to scratch him with wolfish claws. Then, with equal care, he closes his furry hands over mine, connecting me to him with a strong, warm touch.

For a breathless, timeless moment no one moves, no sound is heard, not even the rustling of leaves. We might be in a vacuum, suspended animation. I hold Glenn. Wolfred holds me. And Glenn... He holds both of us. Not just physically but mentally—with his whole being.

Inside his being.

Suddenly I realize Wolfred and I are being pulled together, bound heart to heart somewhere deep within Glenn. As his body is the bridge that links our flesh, so now do our minds merge via the conduit of Glenn's consciousness. He's twining us into a lovers' knot—joining our thoughts, our feelings, our joys and despairs—showing us who we really are and why we tick.

It transcends telepathic communication. We're connecting on all levels, and so intricately I can't tell where Wolfred begins and I end. Everything is happening at light speed, maybe faster. I share his memories and he shares mine. And this is where things get really weird.

Because many of these memories are ones neither of us knew we had.

We're discovering our past lives is what's happening.

Uh-huh.

I've often wondered about reincarnation but figured it was one of those mysteries that could never be solved for certain.

So I was wrong. Sue me.

JUST ANOTHER LONELY KNIGHT

Wolfred and I now see that we go back a long, long way together, back to ancient Babylon and beyond. Many times we've met, in many guises and places. And whenever, wherever, however we meet, we love. If we're not soul mates, we've been doing a darn good imitation of it.

On that joint realization, the hold on us snaps and we slip out of Glenn's consciousness, but not out of each other's. Our link remains because, recognized or not, it's been there all along. The only difference is that now I can read Wolfred's mind as he reads mine. Is that cool or what? This experience seems to have awakened some dormant psychic ability within me. Maybe I inherited it from my kick-ass, psychic mom. Or from my days as an oracle at Delphi...or the time I was imprisoned for witchcraft...

::And I was the priest who tried to help you escape,::
Wolfred adds.

::Because I'd been imprisoned in the first place more for helping you shatter your vows of celibacy than for practicing paganism.::

::Aye, and we both burned for it. But I ne're complained. 'Twas worth it.::

::So you declared at the time, shouting it to the executioners. I remember.::

We died side by side, and I had no regrets either. Not all of Wolfred's and my lives together have ended happily, but they've all ended as they began. In love. Even without Glenn's aid we'd have overcome our differences. We always do.

Which raises the question *why* Glenn did what he did. I

JUST ANOTHER LONELY KNIGHT

know he intended it as a gift, letting us see our long history. It is a precious thing, this added insight. But I know equally well it wasn't necessary; our love would be just as strong regardless. I know Glenn knows it, too. He lies heavy and damp on top of me, breathing hard, his face still pressed against my neck, his rod rigid between my legs. It still knows what it wants, but the rest of him is showing strain.

Precious things come with high price tags. He's paid dearly for this. Why?

::We know why, and for the same reason we know what this gift cost him. We saw his secrets even as we saw our own as he held us in his heart. He realized the risk, yet he could not stop himself, I daresay. Even knowing we'd find full happiness someday, he had to see it, share it ere he left. He needed to feel it with us if only for a heartbeat. Why? I'm no mage, my lady, but methinks one cannot work love magic unless there already be love in oneself.::

Blue eyes in a bestial countenance stare down at me over Glenn's head and shoulders. Then, in a blink, Wolfred pushes out of our threesome, shimmers, and shifts back to a man. We're both aware this conversation needs to continue audibly, but in his fanged state he can only mind-talk.

"The true question is what to do about it," he finishes aloud.

"Do about what?" Glenn mumbles into my hair. He sounds dazed.

I'm not surprised. Even without my other clues, the simple fact Glenn *has* to ask proves what's happened. Wolfred isn't

JUST ANOTHER LONELY KNIGHT

the only one here who's just shifted.

Lord, what a loss. And for what gain?

Emotion grips me like a fist. I look at Wolfred, who's sitting on his heels between Glenn's and my knees, and see passion and poignancy gazing back at me. He knows the answer as well as I do. It's a no-brainer, really. One of those came-saw-conquered situations. And Wolfred and I have toppled like a ton of bricks.

But I think we've grown...expansive enough to handle this. Our love is strong and secure. We've no longer any doubts or fears about it or each other. We've become big enough to open our hearts to a third.

"Aye." Wolfred's smile beams out like sunshine breaking through the trees, bathing me in warmth. "Shall you tell him or shall I?"

"Someone better tell me something." Glenn groans. "I feel like I've just been struck deaf, dumb, and blind."

"You're also sweating all over me," I say. "And we know what that means, don't we?"

His whole body tenses. "Um...I need a shower?"

"No, because we're just going to get you sweatier in a minute." Placing a hand on each side of his face, I lift his head off my shoulder to meet his eyes. "What you need are the people you gave up your powers for. You need Wolfred and me. That was why you wanted to leave. You knew you were starting to care for us too much. When a fey-kin falls in love with humans, he becomes one. And you speeded the process with your spell. You're an ordinary mortal now, aren't you?"

JUST ANOTHER LONELY KNIGHT

Facing old age and death like the rest of us. Love is your Achilles heel.”

“We saw it all within you, and felt your shift even as it happened,” Wolfred explains.

“You’ve been outted,” I add. “The good news is that, in exchange for your immortal body, you’ve gained an eternal soul. We sensed that in you, too.”

Glenn’s eyes narrow. “I’ve *always* had a soul. *Everything* has a soul—even *dust bunnies*. Nothing can exist without one. Soul energy is the force that binds the universe together.”

“Oh.”

I blink.

Clear my throat.

Wonder where dust bunnies go when they die.

Frankly, it’s a bit much to digest at the moment. Especially with the three of us naked and all—and an amazingly persistent erection still stuffing me to the gills. Seems a shame to waste it, y’ know?

I feel a smile stealing onto my lips, and give Wolfred the nod to move in closer. “Well, in that case, Sir Glenn, I guess you’ll have to be content with merely gaining a couple of *soul mates*.”

“Unnhhh...” Glenn answers—probably because Wolfred has just entered him. When they dished out persistence, Wolfred’s cone received a double scoop, too, and once he gets the go ahead, he doesn’t dally.

I melt beneath them as they start a hot bump and grind that sucks me straight into their rhythm. Every time Wolfred

JUST ANOTHER LONELY KNIGHT

withdraws from Glenn, Glenn plunges into me, then pulls out and we do it all over again. A sizzling synergy of give-give, take-take, pumping and humping back and forth. Lots of grunts and gasps—steamy stroking, petting, kissing—lots of luscious, lusty action. There’s not a single superfluous move. Our middleman is running the show. I must say he seems to know what he’s doing.

Glenn may still be a little shaky from his fast morph to mortality. No doubt he’s anxious over his new status, missing his magic, wondering how he’ll survive without it. Wondering how *long* he’ll survive, period. It must feel weird, the prospect of death, when you’ve never had to face it before. Hell, it weirds me out, and I’ve died dozens of times already.

I can’t help but notice, though, that Glenn is every bit as sexy as he ever was. With Pied Piper skill, he’s leading us all into the mind-blowing, magical kingdom of Orgasm. I suppose it’s selfish of me to think this, what with all he’s lost, but I’m sure glad we get to keep him.

“You know something, Sir Glenn?” I pant out. “You haven’t lost all your powers. Your lovemaking is *still* divine.”

“Because I *concentrate* on what I’m doing, instead of talking about it,” he growls. “Shut up and fuck, Lady Dee.”

“Aye, I’ve oft told her that meself,” Wolfred agrees. “Mayhap she needs a spanking.”

“Only if I can watch,” Glenn says.

Wolfred chuckles. “You can do the honors if you wish, and I’ll watch.”

“Hmm...” Glenn pauses on a forward thrust, as though

JUST ANOTHER LONELY KNIGHT

considering the options. “We’ll take turns,” he decides, and blasts me with his grin. “Maybe mortality won’t be so bad after all.”

“Shut up and fuck,” I tell him.

MIMI RISER

Mimi Riser has been an actress, model, clown, belly-dancer, jewelry designer, editor and publisher, but her first and foremost love is writing. She specializes in offbeat tales where laughter reigns and good always triumphs—but she makes her characters really work for their happy endings. Her books have been said to read like a snowball rolling downhill, gathering size and speed as it goes. But if you think her stories are crazy, you should see her life. Once devout city people, she and her husband exchanged the hustle and bustle of Philadelphia a lifetime or two ago for the natural, rugged splendor of the rural southwest. They were looking for a simpler way of life. They got it. It ended up being so “natural and rugged,” they spent their first six and a half years there in a hand-built house with dirt floors, no electricity and no plumbing. This has proved helpful for her historicals as she can now write about the “olden days” from personal experience. They have since rejoined the 21st century and enjoy life on the open range with a house full of eccentric cats and a large, wacky dog who thinks she’s a cat, too. Mimi has had five novels published to date along with numerous articles and short stories. Her historical romance, *I Do*, was a “Top Ten Finisher” in the mammoth Preditors & Editors Readers Poll of 2003, and her contemporary comedy, *Every Jack Needs His Jill*, won the poll the following year for the “Best Mainstream Novel of 2004.” *Samantha White and The Seven*

Dwarves is her first erotic-romance and was one of the winners in Amber Quill's 2007 Heat Wave contest.

To learn more about Mimi and her writing, please visit her website:

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* * *

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