

A woman with her arms crossed and head tilted back, surrounded by a large, vibrant orange flame that appears to be rising from her. The background is a textured, painterly blue with vertical brushstrokes and some glowing orange spots. The overall mood is dramatic and fiery.

Viola Grace

Frost and

Fyr

Fire elemental Fehniel of Hickom knows that her friends have found true love. The wolf in her knows that this frost giant is her mate, but the fire elemental in her wants to fight him all the way. Tynir knows that she is meant for him, but her calculating mind may be more than he can handle when it comes to keeping her safe. Unprepared when he sees the real her, he has to make a choice, run like hell, or fight to keep a woman who makes his cold blood run hot.

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Frost and Fyr
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**FROST AND FYR
ELYMYNTYLS BOOK 3**

BY

VIOLA GRACE

INTRODUCTION

In book one, *Liquid Heat*, the water elemental Djihntalia Bosun was attacked by a fire giant on the Raven's Rest space station. He was trying to collect a bounty laid on the three Terran descendants who run the station bar, *Elymyntyl*. Another fire giant, Ragnar, rescues her and he offers her protective custody until they are sure she is safe.

All goes well until he also offers her hospitality and her mind trips into the type of Hospitality sharing that first intimately united her parents, Terran Myka Michaels and D'hai Bosun of the Dremarai.

Ragnar is the fire elemental who starts a blaze in Jin's heart and body, too bad when they collide, the result could be nothing but steam...

In book two, *Earth and Ayr*, the air elemental Solial Kennan is lured by a rock giant to the planet's surface. He begins with the forbidden lure of kisses and then makes her account for every question...with a kiss.

Sol and Morgarn come to an understanding, but will it be too late to save Fen from her own looming fate?

Well...her fate *is* kinda cute and she has moves he can't even imagine. When your mother is a minder, your father is a wolf king and you are a fire elemental, dealing with a frost giant is a walk in the park.

CHAPTER ONE

Fehniel drummed her fingers on her desk and scowled at the man across from her. "I understand that the seer shot her mouth off, but I don't see why Lord Thosnas would make the assumption that it was us."

The frost giant sat back in his chair and gave her a smirking grin. "You have to admit that the coincidences are a little thick on the ground."

She tented her fingers in front of her. "Tynir, is it?"

"Yes."

"Are you insane, is that it?" She cocked her head and blinked.

He snorted. "Hardly. Thosnas had a seer on hand and all of his grandchildren were allowed to visit. When I went, Morgarn and Ragnar were waiting. She told us that our women would travel in a set of three as well, would be found in the sky and each would be an elemental born of a new world."

Fen scowled. "Unfortunately, that does sound like us. Why did Thosnas try to buy our bar?"

"It was a move to flush the other giants into threatening you. Once you were on the alert, you would be more receptive to having bodyguards and once close to you, it would be easy to see if the attraction was mutual."

"Which it was in the first case and probably is in the second." She went back to drumming her fingers on the table.

“What about the third?” He leaned back to display his bluish grey skin and dark hair. His white-blue eyes had an ever-present amusement that shook her grim, logical outlook the moment that she saw him. His physique certainly was more than acceptable, his chest wide, belly flat and thighs impressively muscled. The only thing that kept her libido under control was the waves of cold coming from him.

“You are impressive, but I have a little problem with the cold you radiate.”

“I am a frost giant. It’s what I do.”

“I am a fire elemental. You don’t see me scorching folks as I pass.” Fen held still and sent a short, sharp stab of inquiry to his mind. She was deflected, but not before she caught a glimpse of his internal heat.

“Did you just send a mind probe?”

She cocked her head and glared at him. “I don’t know, did you feel one?”

“I did.”

“Then perhaps I did.” Her mother hadn’t raised a liar, but her father taught her diplomacy at all times. She always wanted Aleyn and Baileez to be proud of her and she wasn’t sure that this man was the right fit for her.

“You have mental talents?”

“Of a sort. Nothing like my elder siblings. I am the runt of the litter.” She chuckled at the turn of phrase. She was physically the smallest of her brothers and sisters, the royal family of Hickom.

“I see. Would you consider coming to my home and assessing it for suitability?” He was very forthright.

“You are being direct. Where is the attempt to weasel me to the surface under false pretences?” She felt her lips twitch in amusement.

“Time is of the essence. You don’t want to leave your business unattended while it is in operation, so this week off

is the only time available.”

“Morgarn told you.”

“Of course. He is my cousin, after all.”

“Squealer.”

He chuckled. “You are very controlled for someone whose base is fire.”

She laughed. “In my family, you didn’t get too far if you didn’t have self-control. Being able to keep my emotions in check enabled me to reach adulthood.”

“So, will you come to the surface with me?”

She ignored his raised eyebrow and thought about it. Her mind ran through all permutations and combinations, analyzing all possibilities of going down to Jotunheim with this giant that she had just met. Sex, she had no objection to, it was the living among giants that gave her pause.

The Hickom had their own seer and it had told her that she would find a man to *cool her fire*. It had been very vague, but a frost giant did fit the bill.

She would have to contact her parents and let them know where she was going, alert the management that the bar would be closed until further notice and pack a bag.

“I will go but only to check out the accommodations.”
Yeah, right.

“As you will, lady.”

“I have a few things to take care of before we leave, so if you will meet me in my quarters in a few hours, we can leave then.”

“I will escort you there and wait for you. The hired thugs are still on the station. Thosnas has not been able to recall them all yet.”

She twisted her lips into a smile. “Just trying to make sure I don’t bolt, aren’t you?”

“Perhaps. Shall we begin our journey with a few steps?”

She stood and shook her head. “I am a little perturbed by

your lack of romantic instinct. I always wanted to be swept off my feet.”

“Romance will follow, Fehniel. First, I need to get you in my clutches.”

She chuckled and came around the desk, he stood and Fen took his arm. “I will have to settle for *you* being in *my* clutches for now.”

He raised his eyebrow again, but led the way out of *Elymyntyl* and into the halls of Raven’s Rest space station. Fen kept her lips pressed tightly together to hide her smile. A simple look from her companion sent the fire giants scurrying for cover.

“My quarters are —”

“On the eleventh level.”

He wasn’t guessing, making her narrow her eyes at him. “Have you been spying on me?”

“Studying a likely candidate. I am sure you would have done the same.” Tynir checked the lift and when he was sure they would be the only occupants, he escorted her in.

She fought the urge to whistle while they waited for her floor to be announced. It was a sign of nerves and she acknowledged it. Her parents always stressed self-awareness and to be standing next to a man who bore all the hallmarks of her promised mate definitely struck a number of chords inside her, not all unpleasant ones either.

Her rooms were the same sparsely decorated ones that she had left that morning. “Please, be seated. I have to tell my parents where I am going.”

He looked around her common area and took a seat on the couch. “I will be waiting.”

CHAPTER TWO

Fen punched in the transmission code and packed a selection of gowns and tunics while she waited.

“Greetings, Lady Fehniel. Blessings of the day upon you.”

She slid into the chair at her desk and smiled at Von, her family’s servant since before she was born. “Greetings, Von. Blessings of the day to you as well. Is my mother or father available?”

“Your father has a moment. He is passing judgement today, so it will have to be brief.” Von nodded and crossed the room in the vid screen.

Fen waited and her father soon slid into view. “Hello, Father.”

“Greetings, daughter. How are you this day?” His blond hair was only lightly silvered at the edges, his jaw firm and a small fanning of lines ran from the corners of his lids, his royal blue eyes looked straight into hers.

“I am well and I have some news.”

“What news would make you look so nervous, Fen?” He leaned back and took up the pose that she remembered from childhood, all open and approachable.

“I believe that I have met my destined mate.”

His eyes widened slightly, but he nodded. “That would explain the request for your hand I just received via Lord Thosnas of Jotunheim for his grandson, Tynir.”

She whistled and leaned back. “They work quickly.”

“What are your thoughts on the matter?” He sat back and she could see Von fidgeting in the background.

“I am about to go and see his home. He feels...right to me, if that makes any sense.”

“Well, let me know. I am currently in favour of the union, but if you don’t wish him to be yours, I will refuse it.”

That got her attention. “Why are you in favour of it?”

“You have never called to tell me that you are going away with a man before. He has to be exceptional if you are willing to accompany him to the planet below. I may not be a fan of his presumption in inviting you before I made my ruling, but I will not argue with the sparkle in your eyes.”

The eyes he referred to were mirrors of his own. She may have her mother’s dark hair, but her father’s gaze blazed with intensity from her whenever she made eye contact. It was enough to frighten potential suitors off with a simple look.

“Sparkle?”

“The same gleam that your mother had when she seduced me into crafting your brother.”

“Dad, ick. I know the story, no need for a recap.”

“Take care and call me if you require anything, including an armed force to extract you.” He went from jovial to serious in one sentence.

“I will. Have a good day, Father. Rule well.”

“Be safe, Fen. Keep your legs closed.” His wink made her gasp and Von’s strike with a scroll hit him in the back of the head as he disconnected the unit.

Fen sat back and started laughing. She had basically gotten her father’s blessing to jump the giant. This was going to be an interesting trip to the surface.

She was still smiling when she finished putting the message in to the station management that the *Elymyntyl* would be closed until further notice.

With her bag over her shoulder and the silly smirk still on her face, she exited her bedroom and distracted the giant on her sofa. "I am ready whenever you are." She walked to the door and set the cleaning cycle on her rooms.

"That was it?"

"That was it. I spoke to my father and am now ready to accompany you. Shall we?" She opened the door and he quickly moved to take her bag from her.

"Yes, ma'am. They are prepping my shuttle and we should be ready to fly by the time we arrive." Tynir was looking a little flustered, but he moved with her down the hall, keeping his eyes open for any of the other giants lurking around.

"So, your father knows that you will be on Jotunheim?" There was a casual nervousness in his tone.

"Yes, he does. He has always been in favour of his children exploring new planets and societies." It was true, Baileez was always interested in what his children experienced, he considered it a step in their personal evolution.

"Ah. Is he planning to come and visit?"

She chuckled. "Probably not. It depends on his retirement plan or what my mother makes him do."

Fen was eager to get to the surface. Not only would she see a new civilization, but also she would be able to keep track of Jin and Sol again. They were currently beyond her mental reach, but on the surface, that would no longer be the case. If the giants thought that separating them by geography would work, they would be sadly mistaken.

"Your mother rules the king?"

"She submits when she has to, usually in public. In private, they are on very even footing." Not one of their children interrupted their private time twice. Once was enough to traumatize their offspring for life.

“Interesting. I have not heard much about your mother.”

“That is the way she likes it. She is tired of being in the public eye and will no doubt force my father to abdicate so she can spend time with her growing selection of grandchildren.”

They were nearing the shuttle bay and she fell silent. He seemed to be mulling over her words.

Tynir led her to a waiting shuttlecraft. “Please take the navigator’s station. I will stow your bag and we can get clearance for departure.”

She nodded and took her seat, strapping in out of habit. Fen regretted her impulse a second later when he spun her chair to face him and kissed her with an intensity that made her strain against the harness.

Her fingers scraped his shoulders while her chest tried to lift to him. He tasted of icy mint, cool and refreshing while being hot at the same time.

The texture of his mouth was firm and unyielding, but when he completed his exploration, he leaned back with a smirk of satisfaction and a blaze of heat in his ice blue eyes. “Just confirming before we leave.”

He swivelled her chair and locked it back into position.

Fen swallowed and tried to calm her stuttering heart. “Confirming what?”

“That you were the one. It is all well and good to know it in your heart, but sometimes the head cries out for confirmation.” He slid behind the controls and began their exit of Raven’s Rest.

As they entered the blackness of space and rotated their trajectory to Jotunheim, Fen felt a shiver of disquiet. One of the girls was in trouble. She just didn’t know which one. Her impatience to reach the surface doubled and she mentally spurred Tynir onward. He didn’t respond, but his hands imperceptibly shifted as he increased their speed.

She sat back and let a small smile play across her lips. She hadn't used the full pressure of her mind on his, but he had done her bidding. This was an auspicious start to their future dealings.

"This is my home."

He circled the crystalline towers, slowly showing off his home. A village was inside the delicate keep, the population looked to be in the low dozens.

"It's lovely."

"Thank you. The weather here is cold, but you don't seem to be suffering from a difference in temperature."

She laughed. "Hickom is on the cold side. My mother used to joke that my elemental talent was in self-defence. I was born in a snowstorm."

"Your talents manifested at birth?"

"Before birth. My mother had all of the windows wide open during her entire pregnancy. I was her personal warmer that winter." She snickered.

"The city is crystal, not ice, so warm any room you wish to as much as you wish to." He was smiling and there was a relaxed attitude to his shoulders that had not been there on the station. Surrounded by ice, he thawed just by looking at his home.

The shuttle landing was not smooth, jarring Fen's teeth as they bumped to a halt.

She waited until she was positive that the shuttle was powered down before unbuckling her harness. "That was enough to turn my hair white. You don't fly much, do you?"

He grinned. "I fly often. I just land as infrequently as possible."

She sighed in frustration and got out of her seat. He retrieved her bag, leading her to the door before he opened it to let in the frosty air. "You could have warned me to bring a

coat.”

He laughed. “I honestly didn’t think of it.”

She stretched and called her fire. A wave of heat started to come off her skin and she grinned brightly. “Not a problem. I have it covered.”

He wrapped an arm around her waist and used the grip to shepherd her into the glittering residence that he called home. Knowing grins flowed over the faces of the males and speculation ran over those of the females that they passed.

“Why are they looking at me like that?”

“The men are imagining what a little thing like you would look like in their bed and the women are wondering how you would manage it.” He was chuckling at his attempt at humour, but Fen wasn’t impressed.

“You won’t have to worry about me in your bed for a while.” She snickered at his sudden change in expression.

He did not look happy.

“My lord, welcome home.” Four women were lined up in the great hall and all bobbed a curtsy as they approached.

“Gel, Mari, Narila and Mishka. This is Princess Fehniel of Hickom.”

The ladies bobbed acknowledgement as their names were spoken. Mari gave Fen an unfriendly glare, but the elemental ignored it. That was par for the course when a new female stepped into an existing society. The fact that she was almost a foot shorter than the giantesses didn’t make them feel more secure.

“Greetings, ladies.”

Gel was the eldest, she smiled. “Greetings, Princess. I am the housekeeper and Narila will be your personal maid while you are here. Mari and Mishka do the cleaning and make the beds.”

Fen nodded as each woman was introduced in more detail.

"I will show her to her room, Narila, if you could join us in a few minutes to assist her in dressing for dinner?"

"Yes, my lord. Of course." The woman had been gilded with frost, her hair was kissed with silver, her eyes were stormy grey and her long, belted tunic was also grey with silver accents. There was no particular livery to the household and that made Fen heave a sigh of relief. Uniforms were not necessary unless one was trying to prove an equality or rank. The fact that they were not used here was soothing. All were on relatively equal footing in this household.

Fen let herself be whisked through glittering halls and she let her senses keep her oriented in the large space.

"I have to ask you. Why is Jotunheim such a sparsely populated planet?"

He walked her past studies, libraries and game rooms. "We have a zero population growth. Originally, these lands were ripped from the surface of other worlds and delivered here in a great storm of Alliance ships. To keep our people from gathering in separate societies, those towns, villages and enclaves were torn into small chunks and mixed on the surface of Jotunheim. Forced to find matches from other giant species proved undesirable for many and our population began to shrink."

"Don't any of the couples have multiple children?"

"Yes, but not enough to make up for all those who do not. We are a dying race." He stopped in front of two large doors. "These are the guest rooms. Consider them yours while you are here."

He swung the doors open and she whistled softly as she walked in. A com centre, desk and a huge bed were arranged precisely in the crystal blue room. She enjoyed the sparse simplicity right down to the low couch in a rich burgundy that sat in a reading nook near the window. Natural light was

everywhere and she quickly had the room up to her preferred temperature with a slight exertion of her talent.

Tynir was waiting in the doorway. "It meets with your approval?"

"It does."

"Good. Gel will have dinner for us in an hour. The bathing room is to your left and the personal library is to your right."

She cocked her head. "Why do you have so many libraries?"

"It gets very cold here and we tend to stay indoors when we can." He grinned and bowed his head. "I will see you for dinner."

He left her bag on a table next to the doors and closed them behind him.

Narila's timid knock came as Fen was unpacking her bag and lining the gowns up in a wardrobe. "Come in."

The young woman peeked around the corner before she took a rush of steps toward Fen, "Oh, Princess. You should not be doing that. It is my job."

"Calm, Narila. It is my clothing and my job. Now, how do I work the shower? I have tried everything I can think of."

The young woman showed her the trick to starting the faucets—a firm pressure to the centre of the taps. Fen wallowed in a hot shower while Narila completed the unpacking.

She cheated and fluffed her hair with heat. It was bad for it, but it did dry her faster than any towel ever developed. She wrapped her body in the linen and padded out to the bedroom.

Narila was waiting next to the wardrobe. "What will you wear to dinner, Princess?"

"Please, call me Fehniel, or Lady Fehniel if you must. My world is far away as is my birth title." Fen looked through her selections and drew out a midnight blue Hickom gown

with the matching sash.

"The gown goes over my head and the cincher is wound around and around over my breasts and to the top of my hips. Are you up for the challenge?"

Narila's eyes lit up with anticipation. "I am indeed, Lady Fehniel. The silk felt wonderfully soft when I was hanging it up."

"Then let's get this show on the road, as my mother would say." She slid the gown over her head and settled it into place. She lifted the sleeves and held them free so that the wrapping could begin.

It took five minutes to get the wrap settled, but eventually she was confined from breast to hip. "Wonderful. Thank you."

The maid was sweating lightly. Tying the cincher was not for the faint of heart. "That is a fascinating piece of clothing. I noticed you don't wear undergarments under it."

"It does not really allow for it. If you can help me into sandals, that would be appreciated. I should have put them on before I got dressed."

"Point them out and step in. I will do the rest."

With only a minor amount of teetering, she was ready for dinner.

Narila was almost giddy with excitement. She showed her room after room as they made their way to the dining hall. The hall had a few banquet tables and Tynir was sitting at the head table with a pensive look on his face. As Narila cleared her throat, he looked up and his expression changed from internal concentration to something darker, hotter.

"Fehniel, you look good enough to eat."

CHAPTER THREE

Dinner was excellent, Gel was proud as a few young men brought course after course. Some foods didn't agree with Fen's Hickom sensibilities. Her senses were keen and she only took a small bite of the dishes that her enhanced senses told her that she wouldn't like. Most of the time, her senses were dead right.

Conversation was light, Tynir kept flicking his gaze at her gown and finally he made a comment. "Is that... traditional?"

"It is the formal wear for a high-ranking female of Hickom. I rarely get to dress up, so I took the opportunity tonight."

"It is very striking."

"Thank you." She grinned. "Your formal tunic and vest are very nice as well. Who does your embroidery?"

"My mother. She does it just to annoy my father." He was smiling as he ran his long fingers over the stars and snowflakes etched into leather in silver.

"My mother has similar habits. Stuff that drives him nuts."

A young woman played the harp softly and the hall went silent. They listened to the music swelling and swirling through the air and when Fen looked down, her hand was holding Tynir's.

The impromptu concert continued as the evening darkened the walls. The harp was replaced by a lute. The lute

by an instrument that was struck with small wooden sticks. When the trio played together for a final piece, the room burst into applause.

Some folks brought out board games and started to throw dice, a few sets of worn cards were flourished. Fen smiled. "Is it like this every night?"

"Whenever I am home. Would you care to see the view from the top of the towers?"

She smiled. "That would be lovely."

"You can see Raven's Rest from here. It glows blue in the darkness." Still holding her hand, he pulled her to her feet and escorted her to one of the towers. They climbed upward in silence, each step bringing a light draft of cool air to her face.

His hand was warm in hers, but icy air was also coming through his dark belted tunic. Fen's lips twitched as she realised that he was nervous. This was new to him as well and here she was, in his home and her father knew where she was.

The climb took far less time than Fen had hoped. She wanted this camaraderie to last forever. Her body running hot, his running cold and their hands entwined. When he stopped at the top of the stairs and threw open the door to the roof of the tower, she gasped in surprise.

Beneath her, the ground seemed a thousand miles away. Small lights dotted the area nearby, but as Fen looked out and around, the rest of the mountains and fields were dark, leaving the bright glow of the stars overhead.

The stars were so close she could almost touch them. Raven's Rest was indeed huge, glowing blue in the sky.

Fehniel walked to the edge of the crenulated tower and looked up at the stars, seeking Hickom in the vastness.

Tynir came up behind her and wrapped an arm around the tight binding around her waist, pulling her against him.

He raised her arm and lifted her fingers out until she was pointing to the skies. "Hickom is there."

She sighed and leaned back against him. "My home."

"Not for long, I hope. I do truly wish that you find your home here."

His wishes seemed wrapped up with some other interest. His erection was prodding insistently against her lower back as he spoke. His voice rumbled through his chest and sent sensory reactions through her skin. Her nipples, in particular, were pushing against her bindings and a quick glance relieved her worry that they were visible.

She sighed and leaned back into his embrace, his scent filling her nostrils with the crisp air of the mountains and the underlying muskiness of male. She exhaled through her mouth and her breath coalesced in front of her before drifting through the night toward the ground. They stood together in silence and as Fen thought about finding a warm bed in the keep below, a star streaked across the sky.

She immediately held her breath and made a wish.

Warm breath caressed her ear, "What are you doing?"

"Making a wish on a falling star. It is a tradition my mother taught me." Fen smiled as she thought of her temperamental mother and the Terran traditions that she instilled in her children.

"What did you wish?"

"I can't tell you that. It would ruin the power of the wish." She shivered and he tightened his hold, rubbing her arms with his hands. Fen kept her head down to hide her smile. She could warm herself whenever she wished, especially after a large meal. This was simply for his benefit.

"Fehniel, you are cold. Let's go inside. The stars will be out tomorrow."

She allowed him to escort her back into the relative warmth of the stairwell. Just that moment outside woke her

senses. Fen breathed deeply and memorized his scent. It seemed to tick every box on her inner animal's checklist. Her skin tingled, her stomach was flipping and there was a pulse in areas that didn't usually make themselves known.

Her thighs were starting to slip together as she walked down the stairs, her own nose wrinkled at the scent of her heat and she hoped his senses were not as keen as hers.

Their hands held tightly to each other as they descended back into the keep. The small contact was having a riotous effect on her senses, but she didn't pull away. Back on Hickom, few if any men had dared to show an interest in her. She knew it wasn't flattering that his interest was merely the interpretation of a seer's prediction. Still, he did send her head spinning in the most fascinating way.

Tynir escorted her back to her rooms. As he reached out to open her door, she lunged at him, knocking him back against the far wall. Fen pulled his head down and met his lips with her own in a ravaging kiss that soon had him growling. He turned her and held her against the wall, lifting her and pinning her pelvis into place with his own.

She moaned as he rocked against her and she shivered as he broke their kiss and gave her a look of blazing white heat. "Are you sure?"

"Sure that I want to stay here? No. Sure that I want you? Yes."

He gave her a feral grin, "Good enough for me."

Tynir lifted her and wrapped her legs around his hips as he walked quickly to his rooms. The doors opened at his touch and he locked them behind them, striding swiftly to the bed. "How do I get you out of this?"

His hands were caressing her body through the wrapping. She stood where he placed her and tugged the wrap loose. "The rest unravels." Her voice was so husky that she had difficulty recognizing her own words.

“Excellent.” His hands spun her loose and she was so dizzy when she finished twirling that only his hands were steady as her head spun. She moaned as his hands now cupped her breasts through the soft silk of her gown. His thumbs stroked her nipples and she looked up to see him watching her intently.

Nervous, she licked her lip and his face went from observing to intense, the skin darkening on his cheeks and his jaw clenching. Tynir licked the lip where her tongue had recently appeared, stroking his way along the seam of her lips until she parted them on a moan.

He took her mouth slowly and as they explored with their kiss, his hands caressed her curves, cupping her hips, stroking her back and pressing her against his chest, abs and aroused flesh.

The thin gown was no defence against his touch, the pressure of her wrap only served to sensitize all the skin between breast and hip. The traditional clothing suddenly made sense to her in a way it never had before.

The lightest touch on her sides made her shiver, the strokes down her spine made her moan and the pressure of his cock against the soft skin beneath her navel had her shaking with something she knew but was afraid to name.

He gathered the silk and started to haul it upward. He broke their kiss only long enough to whisk the fabric over her head. Tynir groaned as her body was exposed completely.

“Get on the bed.” His voice was so guttural as to be almost inhuman, but she complied.

His boots flew to either side, his tunic and vest were whipped off over his head and finally, his trousers were opened and shoved down with only minor snagging when he had to pry his erection free of the leather. Naked and aroused, every inch of him was hard muscle and pulsing skin. A drop of precum welled and threatened to drip off the

tip of his cock.

Fen scooted back on the bed to make room for him, but he gripped her ankles and pulled her toward him. His kiss was more devastating now that her hands touched flesh and not leather and fabric. High-pitched sighs came from her throat and as he moved from her mouth to the side of her neck, her hips responded by arching against him.

Each touch started a tension in her that built to a high pitch and when his mouth settled on her breast and he parted her folds with his fingers, the tension snapped, stealing her breath and twisting her against him.

Tynir continued his exploration of her opening, sliding two fingers into her, drawing out the juices that her release had produced.

Despite her lack of experience, she was not physically a virgin. Hickom women routinely had their hymens removed just after puberty to ease the trauma of the first time. Blood had an unfortunate effect on males and females of her race, so minimizing physical trauma was a common practice.

Thoughts of her lack of a hymen fled as he withdrew his fingers and replaced them with his mouth. His tongue lapped slowly and deliberately and she felt his smile against her when she tangled her fingers in his hair.

Tynir was dedicated to his purpose and with his tongue lapping, plunging and fluttering from her opening to her clit, she was soon at the edge of release again.

He surged up and pressed the weeping head of his cock against her opening, pressing lightly until her untried flesh yielded to his. Helpless beneath him, her gaze clashed with his as he worked into her inch by inch.

Just when Fen thought there couldn't be any more of him, he eased forward a little more. She hadn't realized that she had that much room inside her, but his slow entry was enough to keep her senses high while her body adapted to

his.

Sweat beaded on his back and as her hands slipped and slid across his skin, she tentatively arched her hips into him. His breathing was hard, as if he was running a race she couldn't see.

Tynir closed his eyes for a moment and when he opened them again, she saw a determination that sent a thrill of nerves down her spine and up into her channel where he was fully seated. Her body clasped him and it snapped something in his self-control, because he immediately withdrew and then slid back into her.

He set a hard rhythm, his body flexing and bunching, the head of his cock dragging within her, waking nerves never before touched.

Wanting him deeper, she wrapped her legs around his hips, tilting her pelvis until he was stroking something inside her that started breathless cries in her throat.

He timed his thrusts to increase the speed of her cries and when she came this time, her nails dug into his rock-hard buttocks, pulling him into her as hard as she could.

His groan of satisfaction followed her and he fought her grip to withdraw and thrust until she felt an icy jet inside her body. He pulled out and then thrust back in, jerking in short bursts as more cold cum was spilled.

Tynir collapsed next to her and pulled her against him. His breath ruffled her hair and he snuggled against her as he fell asleep.

Fen was energized. She had enough energy running through her body to cause a fine tremor in her muscles. She waited with impatience in every fibre of her being and finally she rolled away.

She dropped her gown over her head, gathered her wrap and tiptoed out without finding her sandals. In all the intensity, she lost track of them.

Moving as silently as possible, she snaked down the hallway to her room and opened the door. The gas that exploded in her face was confusing, but the darkness that surged up to swallow her was all too familiar.

CHAPTER FOUR

Cold. Everything was cold. Fehniel yanked on her wrists and heard a shackle rattle.

A hard female voice broke into her analysis. “So, *Princess*. How do you like frost giant hospitality?”

Fen focussed bleary eyes on the maid from Tynir’s household. “Mari? What is this all about?”

“You off-worlders coming here and stealing the men. Do you know how hard it is for a woman on Jotunheim to find a good man? And you take the one I selected for myself.” Mari paced back and forth at the exit to the room carved in the ice that surrounded them.

There was another sort of tension in the maid’s face. The gas was still in Fen’s system and it made her thinking difficult. “That isn’t all of it, is it?”

“Morgarn is slated to rule, but our tradition states that the fittest male or a direct heir is the only one to be selected for that position. With you here, we will ransom you for Morgarn’s abdication.”

“I see and why would he do that?”

“If he wants to keep his new mate happy, he will not want her best friend left to freeze to death in an ice cave in Jotunheim. There are air channels in this room, but once I am gone, the door will freeze shut. Hope that he gives in quickly and you might survive.”

Mari didn’t let her say anything else, but stepped through

the doorway, which was suddenly blocked by a wall of ice.

Fen counted to one hundred. It wouldn't do to run into Mari in the hallway. This required more stealth.

Her legs were cuffed and the chain was sunk into the ice the same way the manacles above her head were set. Fen heated the chain and pulled it from the ice, rolling her shoulders to release the tension for her next move.

She was still wearing the light silk gown, so she tried to keep it on. Concentrating, she shifted her hands into paws and the manacles dropped off. It was one of the skills her father had always been upset that she learned. A partial shift was supposed to be reserved for warriors, but Fen had insisted on learning it.

Her feet would be trickier, so she leaned her re-formed hands against the wall and as she shifted, she stepped forward. Her wolf legs were not designed to support a human spine, so leaning was the best manner with which to step out of the iron.

With her feet back in place, her hands back to normal, Fen turned to the exit wall and melted a doorway in the ice.

The water turned into slick ice as she stepped on it, but she kept her body heat up so that she wouldn't skid on the surface.

Ice was an amazing carrier for scent. Mari had walked through the halls and Fen was going to find the way out by smell.

Tynir. He may have wondered what happened to her. She concentrated as she made her way down the hall. *Tynir?*

He didn't respond, so she tried again. This time, she caught his startled emotions as she touched his mind. *Tynir?*

Fehniel? Where the hell are you?

I was kidnapped. I am in some kind of icy cavern.

Kidnapped? His rage burned along their connection.

Yes. Now stay calm, anger hurts. Mari had my room rigged and

when I opened the door, I was gassed. If I had opened it when you escorted me there, we both would have been out.

Mari? More rage flared before he got it under control. She felt him running, but couldn't tell where he was headed. Stay where you are. The caverns are dangerous.

I know. Cold and slippery, too.

The fenrir have been seen in the area, so be on your guard.

He didn't ask her why she had been taken, but she didn't have time to ask what a fenrir was either. Whatever it was, was right in front of her.

A huge wolf was snarling, its thin ribs showing through the fur. That was bad. This one was dangerous, hunger made it desperate.

She tried to deter it with a wall of flame, but it just waited for her to flicker it out. When it lunged at her, she mentally apologised to her seamstress and took on her own wolf form, fire blazing on every hair follicle and out of her claws.

He struck her hard on the shoulder, but the mouthful of flame he received sent him stumbling back and swiping at his muzzle with his paw.

She stood and lunged, snapping and snarling as blood flowed and drove her to kill.

The battle became her entire world. She fought, bit, retreated and lunged again. He scored a few hits, but her body would repair when she became human again. He would not be so lucky.

A roar that came from neither of them separated her from her attacker. The scent of enraged male overwhelmed the blood in the air. Tynir stood between her and the fenrir, shoving his arm down the wolf's throat and calling the cold.

The wolf died after a few feeble swipes with its paws. Tynir threw it aside and turned to her. "Ah, Fehniel."

She sat and tried to stop her rage, but it was still inside her and she couldn't shift back to her bipedal form.

Tynir stroked her fur and her flesh cooled under his touch. She didn't fight him when he lifted her and carried her out of the tunnels.

They were only half a kilometre from the keep and he carried her quickly to his home and with a few scattered words, the servants went running. The smells of the giants came far more easily to this shape and she memorised them all.

Tynir was carrying her quickly. She smelled scorched skin and tried to pull back her flame. She was hurting him.

She whined and kicked her legs to be let down, but he kept his grip. Gel ran in front of them and opened the door to Tynir's room. The scent of their coupling was still in the air, so she couldn't have been unconscious long.

Gel ran for the bathroom and started running a bath. Tynir barked out another command and Gel left quickly, exiting the chambers efficiently.

Fen smelled fear in the air. Many of the giants were sunk in it, but Gel was wallowing in it. She was happy that the woman wasn't there anymore. Fear stunk.

Tynir stood next to the porcelain pool and without ceremony, dropped her into the water. The water was deep and it sizzled as she struck it. She paddled around as her body cooled to normal. Her natural form came easily as soon as she was cleared of the scent of blood.

Tynir was watching her from the edge of the sunken tub. "Come here, Fehniel." He crooked his fingers and she floated toward him, turning off the tap as she did so.

"Yes?"

He threaded his hand in her hair and lifted her from the water for a hard kiss. His hand formed a fist and he held her tightly. "When were you going to tell me?"

She drew a blank. "Tell you what?"

"About you being a shifter."

She couldn't help but laugh despite her awkward position. "I am my parents' daughter first, an elemental second and a shifter third. I never even thought about it."

"You are mine. That should be first on your list."

He punctuated his sentence with another hard kiss and she squeaked as a flicker of pain came to her.

"Say it."

"Say what?"

"Say that you are mine." He kissed her again.

"I will not say it." The water supported her, but the tight grip on her hair was making her eyes sting. She was hers and no one else's. He may have been in her mind and she had a care for his emotions, but she was not his. Not yet.

"You will. Before you leave my rooms today, you will." The threat in his voice was implicit.

Sol?

Fen! How are you?

I am fine. Whatever you hear in the next few hours, I am fine, I am safe and I am with Tynir, the frost giant.

Really?

He is mine the same way Morgarn is yours and mine is about to prove it.

Thank you. Good luck.

With that little chore taken care of, she allowed Tynir to lift her from the bath without a fight. He wrapped her in a long span of linen, carrying her to the bed. Straps and cuffs were laid out on the bed and it was at that moment that Fen realized that Tynir was not playing.

CHAPTER FIVE

If she had ever imagined her first fight with a lover, she could never have come up with the position he placed her in.

Her arms were bent and fastened securely behind her back, her calves and thighs were banded with leather and then linked together, a belt around her belly formed an anchor point for her thighs and cool air washed over her folds and opening.

She shuddered as he stood in front of her, removing his clothing and folding it to the side with deliberation.

“You are mine first, then your parents’ daughter, then your being an elemental and shifter are part of your identity.”

Even trussed and vulnerable as she was, she fought that. “I am my own being first and foremost.”

“Fine, this will not be easy for you then.” He leaned forward and pressed his mouth over her most sensitive flesh.

Hours went by while he fed on her with his mouth, pressed into her with his cock and then he ceased her climb to orgasm with an icicle that he structure in front of her dazed eyes to look exactly like his flesh and blood member.

The ice moving inside her set her body back to the starting position, but no matter how much she whined, pleaded and struggled, he would not let her go over unless she gave him the words he wanted.

He was not going to get those words no matter how much her body wanted it.

The light in the room was fading and the aches in her body told her that Tynir had been at his torture for hours. His arms and legs were shaking with fatigue, so for his benefit as well as hers, she spoke from a throat hoarse from screaming. "Tynir. Stop."

"What? Are you willing to give me what I want?"

She sighed. "I am mine first. I will always be mine first. Without that, the power that I hold would be out of my control."

"So, where does that leave me?" Sweat dampened his hair, his ice blue eyes were intense and his erection shone softly in the fading light.

"It is very difficult for me to just lie here and surrender. Just a moment." She heated the leather around her thighs and waist, snapping free of it as it dried to brittleness. She rolled to her abdomen when her legs were free and did the same to her arms.

He was looking surprised again, but she knelt on the bed and kept her hand over his mouth. "I am drawn to you like no male before. I want to stay with you and learn the ways of your people, making a place for myself in this world. I cannot do that if you are the centre of my world. If I give you everything, there will be nothing left for me and my power will flow free. I am not a rock, I am not a tree, I am a living being with power and having self-control depends on my sense of self."

A flicker of understanding ran through his gaze and he nodded.

She kept going. "If you had to give control of your talent to me, would you?"

Doubt flickered in his eyes.

She smiled. "So, you see my dilemma. I tried to hold still

for your sake, but your punishment was unjust and I was tired of it."

Her body ached and she just wanted to sleep. "I will sleep in your bed, but if you want to hold me, you had better come to me with the understanding that I am a woman of power and I need that control to keep folks safe around me."

Remorse ran across his features and she removed her hand. "I understand and apologise. I was surprised by your other form and reacted badly to your danger."

"I understand that and it's why I didn't burn you to a cinder a few hours ago." Her smile was sweet and she peeled back the sheets, scooting under them with a sigh of relief.

"That won't do. Come with me." He gestured for her to come with him to the bathroom.

Tynir had a warm tub full of suds ready when she hobbled her way into the bathroom. He got in before her and held her hand to guide her into the tub. "I kept you in that position too long. Come, I will make it better."

She sat with her back against his chest in the foaming water. "This feels wonderful."

"Just wait." He started to massage her, starting at her shoulders, working down her arms and even her fingers got a loosening rubdown. Once her arms were limp, he treated the rest of her muscles to the same treatment.

Her hips tensed at his touch, but her thighs and buttocks enjoyed the ministrations of his strong, sure fingers.

She dozed off with her body completely relaxed, the restrictions of the last few hours faded into a fuzzy memory overridden with her body's satisfaction.

She heard a sluice of water and the cool air of the bathroom kissed her skin for a moment before she was swathed in towels and rubbed dry.

Aches and pains had faded completely as he carried her back to the bedroom and tucked her between the sheets. His

body curled around hers and he nestled against her as she let herself drift off into an exhausted sleep.

* * * *

Tynir woke to the most exquisite sensation. A hot, wet column was enveloping his cock and was slowly drawing back, sucking and then sliding forward again. He was trembling on the edge of coming when Fehniel stopped.

She looked up at him with those midnight blue eyes and she slid up his body, positioning her wet opening over the head of his cock.

He fisted his hands in the sheet as she slid onto him in minute increments. A groan came from his throat as his instincts told him to thrust deep. He fought his urges while she slowly lifted and dropped onto him, his cock squeezed by hot, wet flesh. She was so *tight*.

As she took up her rhythm, he briefly closed his eyes and kept his grip on the sheets before opening them again once his control had been established. His hips rose to meet hers and he couldn't take his eyes off the image she presented. Fehniel's breasts flexed and shivered with every motion, her nipples tight and making his mouth water.

She alternated between cupping her breasts and running her fingers through the wealth of dark hair, lifting it off her neck as sweat trickled down to nestle between her breasts before trailing toward her navel.

Her channel pulsed and tightened around him, her eyes opened as she gasped and made a high squeak while her climax rippled through her. Her rhythm faltered and it was all he could take. With a snarl, Tynir flipped her to her back and thrust into her hard and fast until he felt the tightening in his balls that preceded an orgasm that almost blew the top of his head off.

He groaned and slumped over his lover, his chest heaving as he tried to regain his breath.

* * * *

Beneath him, Fen ran her hand through his hair. "Mari wants to blackmail Morgarn into surrendering his right to rule."

"What?"

"Her plan was to get Solial to force Morgarn to abdicate from the line of rule so that the bloodline wouldn't be contaminated with off-worlders. We should probably get to Thosnas's home soon."

He looked at her in surprise with irritation in his gaze. "Why didn't you tell me earlier?"

"We were working things out. I think we are in a fairly good place now. What about you?" She arched her hips into his with a wink.

"Let's get going. Just a moment, I will take you to your rooms. Don't go without me." He added after a deep breath, "Please." He levered off her and slid from inside her.

Fen noted with interest that he was either hard again or aroused again. Either one would work at another time. She sat up and blinked at the bizarre sensation of his semen sliding out of her.

He was getting dressed, when he turned his back to her.

Fen winced to see the claw and scorch marks she was responsible for. "Sorry about that."

He pulled a shirt on and when he looked at her, he grinned. "I didn't mind at the time and I don't mind now." He sat next to her and tugged on his boots.

She leaned over to give him a quick kiss. They had both caused pain and both accepted it. It was a bit much for a first week together, but their trial by fire was putting them on an equal footing without damaging their growing trust.

When he was fully dressed, he stood and offered her a tunic. "You can wear it back to your rooms."

She pulled the fabric over her head, inhaling the smell of him as she went. It was on her body, in her hair and seeping from between her thighs. She used the tenting effect of the tunic to satisfy her wolf's urge to take in her mate's scent. He had a knowing look in his gaze when she pulled her head free of the neckline.

She winked. "The wolf won that one. Now, where are we going?"

"To your unused chambers. Come along."

Her thighs needed some convincing to press together, but after a half dozen steps, she wasn't wobbling nearly as badly as she anticipated.

Her chambers were empty, but Tynir went to the wardrobe and opened it with the attitude of someone waiting for a booby trap.

He selected one of her Hickom gowns and the matching wrap. "Shall I send for Narila?"

"Are you willing to help?" She threw off the tunic and grabbed for the black gown he was holding.

"Yes."

"Then come over here and wrap me tight, but not strangling. I will hold my sleeves." She posed with her sleeves and he took up the challenge. After two false starts, he did a respectable job of wrapping her from hip to breast in silver fabric.

"I forgot my shoes again." Her cheeks turned pink.

He reached into the wardrobe again and withdrew black boots that she didn't recognize. "These are for you. You didn't seem to have any cold-weather gear, so I had these brought in."

"Thank you, Tynir."

"Have a seat and give me your feet." He smiled at his

rhyme and waited until she complied. The boots laced tight and hugged her calves perfectly.

Tynir trailed his fingers from the top edge of the boot to her inner thigh when he finished lacing them and she smacked his hands. "Morgarn and disaster...remember?"

He sighed and pulled his fingers back when they were less than an inch from the juncture of her thighs. He lifted her to her feet and ushered her to the door. They walked the halls in matching colours. The wolf part of her who had already mated for life was howling in triumph, while the elemental within was flaring wildly.

Gel was surprised to see them, "My lord, what may I get for you?"

"A cloak for my lady and we will be gone."

The housekeeper gave Mishka a quick look and the young woman made a run for a dark hall. She returned in moments with a cloak of deep black velvet lined with silver fur.

"My lord, Mari has gone missing."

Tynir looked to Gel, "I am aware of it. She was responsible for Fehniel's sudden exit before dawn."

"So, my lady didn't run?"

Fen's mouth opened in shock. "You thought I ran?"

Pink darkened his cheeks. "I could not come up with a better explanation."

"What about the gas that she used to kidnap me?"

"It isn't something that we can smell. After you contacted me, I found the ampoule, but before that moment, there were a few hours of a tantrum, I will admit."

She looked at his embarrassed face and realized that he had been frantic and furious that she had left him in the middle of the night. Their first time together.

"We will discuss your temper at a later date, Tynir. I can and will travel to visit my friends." She settled the cloak around her shoulders and she pulled the hood down to cover

her smirk.

Fen walked into the crisp morning air and within five minutes, they were in the air flying over the patchwork of Jotunheim.

Thosnas's home loomed in the distance with all the grace of a Hickom cathedral. The vast windows and spiralling towers brought a smile to her lips. "Lovely architecture."

"He is proud of it. It was built by an ancestor nine hundred years ago and the maintenance is detailed."

There were three other skimmers on the landing pad. Tynir put them down right next to the others. He helped her step down and took her hand to lead her into the home of the most powerful man on the planet.

"Tynir, I will be in communication with my friends. Don't spook Mari by standing out. We want her to go insane when she finds out I am not freezing to death in that cell."

When his jaw flexed, she realized that she should not have mentioned the last part. This was going to get ugly.

CHAPTER SIX

Sol, I am here and I am hanging back. Did Mari make her move yet?

Fen, oh thank the stars, yes. She has mentioned it to Morgarn, but to bring it up before the council, she needed to be here for Thosnas's judgement day.

Is Jin around?

Yes, but she is off to the side with her family and Ragnar. She will wait until you signal before stepping forward.

You told her what happened?

Yes, and she is less than pleased.

Fen couldn't help her smile. You can tell her that it is her fault for falling for the fire giant. She started this whole ball rolling.

Sol laughed and they cut the connection.

"Why are you smiling?" Tynir's voice was warm in her ear.

"A conversation with Sol. She will wait for my grand entrance before starting some shit."

He grinned back. "May I join in?"

"Oh, darling. I would be disappointed if you didn't." She held his hand tightly and they moved through the crowd of giants until they were in a quiet alcove. From this vantage point, they could see everything and yet be relatively unseen themselves.

The pain in her ass who had tried to buy her bar out from under her took his seat against the north wall of the great

hall. An official stood next to him and blew a horn.

The sound rang out and those who came for judgement organized themselves.

Fen narrowed her eyes at Mari and pulled her own hood down further. Mari would bolt if she was discovered and Fen didn't want that to happen.

She looked up and admired the swords in the ceiling. The positioning was unusual and it made her ask, "Are those swords up on the walls recent?"

Tynir looked around. "Yes, they were not here the last time I spoke to my grandfather."

"When was that?"

"A few weeks ago. While we were plotting and scheming to get you down here."

The horn blasted out again and the first person with a dispute came forward—a mountain giant who had lost some sheep to a frost giant.

Mari was third applying for judgement. She strode forward with arrogance and faced Thosnas. "My lord, I demand that your grandson Morgarn be removed from consideration of succession."

The old giant leaned forward and crooked a brow at her. "Demand?"

"Yes, it is unseemly for him to be wed to an off-worlder and for his children to be inheritors of your lands." Mari was bristling with icy indignation.

"Morgarn, what do you think of this?" Thosnas beckoned and his grandson, the mountain giant, stepped forward with his new bride at his side.

"I think that this is yet another attempt to disrupt the plans that you and the council have put into play regarding succession and involvement with the Alliance."

Mari was staring at him in shock. Apparently, this was not the answer she had been expecting. "Lord Thosnas, your

grandson earlier promised to withdraw his bid for succession."

Morgarn put his arm around Solial and winked down at his wife. "I promised to withdraw if you released Fehniel from her ice prison. What you could not know at that point was that there was no way you could. She was already back with my cousin in good health."

That was their cue. Tynir led her through the crowd and they stopped in front of Mari. A few other giants in the crowd quickly ran for the nearest exit.

"How? There was no way out of that room." The horror on her face was genuine.

"I can understand your confusion." Fen released the catch on her cloak and passed it to a servant nearby. Her body language must have communicated to Tynir, because he took a step back.

She held her hands out at her sides and brought fireballs into being. While the near members of the crowd were stunned, Fen shifted her face into a wolf's and snapped the air inches from Mari. With a light smile playing around her mouth, she returned her body to normal.

Thosnas started applauding. "Fire and a shifter. My grandson is a lucky man."

Guards moved to grab Mari and Fen rounded on Thosnas. "You, sir, are the most manipulative, weasely, sneaky giant that the gods ever created. Did it ever occur to you just to ask?"

The patriarch of the giants was leaning back, away from her fire.

"Do you know how hard it was for us to start that bar on Raven's Rest? How difficult it was to build up steady clientele?"

Sol was watching her with wide eyes. Jin appeared and was just as surprised as the other elemental.

Thosnas was blinking, but smiling. "I had heard that you were the most level-headed of the three and I think I now know why. You are all business, aren't you?"

"I save my fire for what matters. Friends, family, business and love." She crossed her arms over her chest and glared at her new grandfather-in-law. She was quite sure that her father had already signed the papers, so setting her new family straight was going to be her first step.

"Good. The giants here will need someone knowledgeable when they begin off-planet trade."

Fen blinked. "Are you serious?"

"We found out that our planet is sentient and slowly waking, but we have a psi-enhancing mineral here and we need someone to broker it. Djihntalia would be an excellent front person with Ragnar to assist, Solial is an amazing enforcer loyal to Morgarn and you are a calculating woman who has the support of a very honourable man. We need only gain control of the space station above to use as a base of distribution and the giants will once again enter the Alliance with heads held high." Thosnas was smiling as all of his schemes and machinations were coming to fruition in front of his eyes.

Sol, Jin and Fen looked at each other and had a silent communication. When imperceptible nods came from her two friends, Fen turned back to Thosnas. "We need to speak privately. The mates, the ladies and you."

"I believe that I need to finish the immediate matter first." He looked past Fen to the woman who had kidnapped her, flanked by guards. "Mari, I reject your petition to have Morgarn struck from the succession. I find you guilty of kidnapping and am holding you for sentencing and questioning for others who share your thoughts on these fine ladies of impeccable families."

"My lord, no! They are all blends of other species."

"And they are now members of my family." His voice boomed and Mari flinched at the wave of sound and blast of air that came with it.

That power surprised Fehniel. She whispered to Tynir, "What kind of giant is Thosnas?"

"A storm giant. The last of his kind. He married my grandmother and they began a family of daughters that astonished those around them." He smiled and put his arm around her tightly wrapped waist.

Mari was shaking as she was taken out of the audience hall.

"I almost feel sorry for her."

"Don't. If you hadn't escaped or been able to call me, you might be dead by now." His harsh tone reminded her of the danger she had been in.

"Fair point." She wrapped her own arm around his waist and squeezed him to remind him she was safe.

Thosnas asked, "Is there anything urgent that needs to be addressed today?"

The crowd shook their heads.

"Good, now let me go and talk with my family."

A giant woman of elder years but with a twinkle in her eyes greeted them as they followed Thosnas to a private garden in the centre of his home.

"Fehniel, this is my grandmother, Khasna. Grandmother, my chosen, Princess Fehniel of Hickom."

The woman eyed her warily. "You are the fire elemental."

"Yes, madam."

"Tynir is frost."

"I am aware of that, madam." She waited patiently, the woman was going somewhere with this.

"Isn't that a little contradictory when you come together?"

"Only if we are not careful, madam. Your grandson and I are very big on self-control."

“He has a temper.”

“I have noticed that as well, but usually in defence of others. He may feel it, but he won’t use it to hurt the ones he cares about.” Even when he had been torturing her, he had been careful and only her stiff muscles resulted.

Tynir was standing next to her, waiting for Khasna’s verdict. “Give me a hug, granddaughter. It is a relief to welcome you to the family.”

Tynir let out a gust of air as Fen hugged his grandmother. She kept her internal snickers to herself.

When the familial introduction was over, Thosnas snaked an arm around his wife and asked Fen, “So, what is it that you needed to discuss with me?”

“You will not be able to purchase the space station.”

Jin and Sol stepped forward and close to her.

“Why not?”

“Because the owners won’t sell it.”

Thosnas looked confused. “How could you possibly know that?”

“Because it is owned by the Gaia Group. It was a silent takeover and only the management knows that the station has changed hands.”

He looked angry and irritated. The men stood protectively next to their ladies and Fen felt Tynir wrap his arm around her and braced for his grandfather’s temper.

“Who is the Gaia Group? I have never heard of them.”

Fen, Sol and Jin looked at each other for a moment. “We are.”

Thunder boomed in the distance. “What?”

The girls were shoved back and the men stepped forward to face their grandfather. It took him ten minutes to calm down, but he finally did.

“Can you tell me how you happen to own the station above my head?”

Fen grinned. "A seer came to me when I was a teenager and gave me a reading. She said that not only would my best friends be air and water, but also I would find my destiny and my true mate over the head of a giant. It took a lot of research, but I pinpointed the station and we were already friends who wanted to leave home. The rest came naturally."

Thosnas's mouth opened and closed for a moment and then he erupted in laughter. Khasna held him as he howled with mirth and smiled at the girls while her husband got himself back under control.

"Will you accept the position as business manager for the Jotunheim exporting system?" He was asking her directly and she decided to ask Tynir.

Would you mind if I took this position?

I have a few positions with you in mind and none of them involves business. But I believe this will make you happy, so please take it on.

Thank you. That is going to get you all kinds of goodies as soon as I can do some research on sex. Being new to the concept is awkward.

What? You were not a virgin.

No hymen, but it was the first time I took a man inside of me. Hickom women have the hymen removed to prevent bloodlust during first mating. It's safer.

His hands held her waist tightly and she knew that this would be discussed later. His mind was reeling with shock. "Yes, I will take on the challenge of trying to organize your business matters."

"Excellent. Now to a meal, you look far too pale for my liking." Thosnas led the way into a dining hall and when he had spoken to a servant, food began to appear.

Before they started eating, he lifted his goblet. "To my grandsons, who knew a good thing when the seer told them of their future brides, to the elementals who had the good taste to agree that life amongst the giants held some appeal

and to my beloved Khasna, who gave me a garden of daughters that bore this strange and unanticipated fruit.”

Everyone lifted their goblets and drank.

Morgarn stood and raised his goblet. “To a future where Jotunheim thrives and grows and to my beloved Solial and her chosen friends Djihntalia and Fehniel. Three women of power who took pity on us poor males and made our lives brighter.”

The three elementals didn’t drink to themselves but all blushed, their varied skin tones darkening.

The conversation turned to intergalactic trade, some of the characters who had frequented the bar and the families that were on the way to visit. Sol’s grandmother and grandfather were already visiting Thosnas, Jin’s brothers were at Ragnar’s home and Thosnas informed Fen that her sister and brother-in-law were coming to ratify the union.

Laughter flowed as freely as the wine and when Tynir escorted her to their guest rooms, the wine and laughter took over in a loving tumble to the bed. He was on top, then she was on top and nothing mattered except that they were together.

* * * *

Two years later

“I understand that you want to expand production, but Tonhemic has become a black-market substance. We need to control the amount and the destinations.”

Morgarn nodded and looked to the miner who was pushing for expansion. “Slow and steady expansion is what we are after, Raso. These are early days and many of the psi races are experimenting and creating records of effect. We need these to produce more information, documents to show that we are responsibly examining our product. The price

that we are demanding is only acceptable because we are restricting production. The planet can drain the mineral of its properties at any time and we have to keep that in mind.”

Raso scrubbed his face. “We will abide by your decree, my lord.”

“Thank you. Do mention this to your miners as well. Several have been caught smuggling the mineral to Raven’s Rest. The scanners on the station find the mineral the instant that the shuttles dock. There is really no chance for them to engage in profit.”

Fen grinned. The scanners were members of the Gaia Group who wanted to be helpful.

Raso cleared his throat. “I am not missing any men, nor have any reported anything like that.”

Fen looked to Morgarn and receiving his permission, she explained. “There is a minder on premises as well. Their little excursion into illegality is removed from their minds and their connections are tracked down.”

“Oh. I see.” He was looking worried and Fen quickly touched his mind, running through his own thoughts of espionage that had just been nipped in the bud.

Morgarn dismissed him and turned to her. “Well, cousin, what do you think?”

“I think that the properties of the mineral need the examination. I think that Raso is going to tell the men that they are to stop trying to smuggle it and I think that Tynir had better get his butt in here before this baby appears in your office.”

She grunted as another pain rippled through her. *Tynir! Now is the time and I don’t want to give birth in front of your cousin.*

Morgarn opened the door and called for Sol. She came in and grasped the situation. She raised her hand to lift Fen with air and the pregnant woman glared her friend into

freezing. "I am going to start walking. Feel free to follow me. Blow air up my skirt and I will injure you, Sol."

Jin had been giving her birthing classes and she knew what to expect. It didn't make it less uncomfortable or make it hurt less, but it was comforting.

Jin was on the station right now and Fen cursed the timing. She slowly made her way through the halls until Tynir caught up with her and lifted her into his arms.

"How long, Fen?"

"Since this morning, but I couldn't miss the meeting with Raso." She grunted as another pain gripped her.

This was the first baby to be born to the new ladies of Thosnas's family and she had wanted to get all the business out of the way before becoming a mother.

A birthing chair was in the corner of her bedroom and after setting her down on the bedding, he settled the chair closer to the bed. Tynir lifted her and placed her on it with gentle care. He changed her clothing, putting a new nightgown on her for the labouring and bustled about getting ready while her body slowly spun out of her control.

The Jotunheim midwife stood by in case she was needed, but Tynir managed to handle everything with only minor coaxing.

When she got the urge to push, he told her to breathe until she felt the tremendous pressure below. Her child slipped from her body in a rush and landed with a smack in its father's hands. The frost giant thawed as the tiny one wailed its distress at the speedy entry into the world. The midwife came over, tied the umbilical cord and allowed the proud father to cut the cord.

"Here he is, Fen." His voice was thick with emotion.

"He?" It was a little boy with his father's ice blue eyes. Thankfully, he was the same size as a normal Hickom baby, but he was his father's son and would no doubt be quite the

giant.

They would name him at a formal ceremony in a week, but for now, she admired the dark fuzz of his hair and the silky skin of his cheek under the slickness of the birthing fluids.

After the rest of the birthing details were carried out and the midwife pronounced her sound, she was allowed into another fresh nightie and was placed into her bed. She was a little tired, but there were visitors and protocol meant that Thosnas meet his grandson.

Sol came in and grinned at the new baby. "He's adorable, well done."

"Thanks." Tynir grinned and got swatted by his wife.

Thosnas pronounced him the most handsome baby that ever there was, Khasna wanted to babysit immediately.

Ragnar brought in a portable com and let her show her new son to her mother and father back on Hickom, while Jin used her other talents to check on the birthing stress. "You just had to do this while I was on the station."

"Sorry, he saw his moment and he went for it." She opened the nightgown to allow her bundle of joy to have his meal.

Jin grinned, her parents laughed and Sol covered Morgarn's eyes as her friend bared her breast.

With his eyes covered by his wife, Morgarn asked her, "So, when can we go over those purchase proposals?"

The room at large gasped, but Tynir laughed. "Give her until the morning. Today is all about family."

Fen looked up at her frost giant. For a man whose very soul could radiate cold, she fell in love with the heat he fostered in her. It had been a slow start on the road to love, but the path had been set in stone.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

Thanks for coming along on the Elymyntylys mini-series. *Liquid Heat, Earth and Ayr* and *Frost and Fyr* have been the first books in the Gaia Group series.

They are the children of the Terran Times and are now out on their own looking for and finding love.

A few more will make their way out into the Alliance as time and the publisher permits.

I wish you a joyous time with family and friends in whatever season this finds you.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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

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

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

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

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