

# Nature's Whim

Aline de Cheigny



Red Rose Publishing

Nature's Whim  
*by Aline de Chevigny*

**Red Rose Publishing**

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First published in 2008-05-22, 2008

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ISBN: 978-1-60435-025-8

ISBN: 1-60435-025-3

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Cover Artist: Merris Hawk

Editor: Terri Morris

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Forestport, NY 13338

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## **Chapter One**

When Desi left after the murder case in LA had been solved, Ares reverted to his old self. No woman had ever left him before, he'd always been the one to get bored and move on. But after Desi left him, he resorted to seducing and bedding woman after woman, trying to forget her, trying to get her out of his head. The woman just refused to leave him be, nothing he tried filled the void she'd left behind; nothing but the heady sense of pure raw power that started to fill his veins as he garnered more followers.

The more followers that worshiped him and his temples in blind devotion and adoration, the more power flowed through his veins. He drank in every drop with greedy relish. The power was heady and fulfilling, but still something lacked.

He'd managed to convince himself that what he felt for the traitorous woman Desi, wasn't love, but power. Her power to be precise. He'd lacked it back then while she'd had it in abundance. Meeting Desi had been a sign that the time had finally come for him to retake his place in the world of man.

It was time to reclaim his mantle as the God of War, or even take his father's place as the most powerful of the old gods. It was time for him to become the King of the gods.

"Matius!"

Ares watched Matius, pleased with how quickly the warrior answered his summons. The man was a true warrior, Ares wanted a few hundred more like him.

He still sported the scar he'd received from his father for having dropped his milk when he'd been a child. The scar split his right cheek, from eye to chin; it had faded now but he wore it with pride, as a reminder that he was no longer weak and vulnerable.

"Yes my god, Ares?"

"Are the temples multiplying again?"

"Yes, my god Ares. Your disciples wished to show you proper fealty."

Ares inhaled deeply, every time another temple went up his power gained in strength. He was almost back to full power, he loved the newfound freedom that presented him.

"Good, good. How is my army coming along? Are they almost ready to receive my blessing?" The lack of emotion on his Lieutenant's face told him that he wouldn't like the answer one bit.

"They were training as you ordered my Liege, but the earth opened up beneath their feet and swallowed half the men in the beat of a heart."

"The earth swallowed—But no god has the power to—"  
"Anger boiled his blood as the fog of truth cleared before his eyes. "Leave me, I will deal with this. See to it the lost warriors are replaced and get them back to training."

"I follow your will, oh great god Ares."

Ares paced to the table laden with food and struck out in anger. The power of his rage split the table in half, food spilling all over the floor of his tent. "You will pay for that Gaia. Mother Nature or not, no one will stand in my way. No one! Now, where are you hiding?"

Walking to the tent opening, he surveyed all that was his. Yes, he missed the comforts of his home, but it now held too many memories. Memories that even after months of planning and preparation still distracted him from his destiny. Yet he couldn't deny the pull he felt to go after her, the urges he fought with the iron will of the warrior he was.

Lightning flashed in a clear blue sky and struck the only tree left standing in his camp, splitting it straight down the middle. The singed and burning wood reminded him that he had other more pressing matters to worry about. For one, he needed to find Gaia before she ruined all his carefully laid plans. He needed to learn why she suddenly decided to work against him plus where she received such power. The time had come to return to Mount Olympus.

Matius' report of the devastating earthquake hadn't been the only natural disaster to plague the earth of late. They'd experienced tornadoes, tidal waves, hurricanes and a record number of volcanoes were becoming active all over the world.

Nature seemed to find a way to strike within his personal vicinity, always hurting or killing his men just before they were ready to go to battle, effectively putting him out of commission and back to square one. He hadn't missed the fact that the attacks always occurred while he was asleep and dreaming of her!

The dark circles under his eyes attested to the fact that he hadn't been sleeping much of late. It was a good thing for him that a god needn't much sleep. Those dreams always felt so real, so vibrant that he could swear that Desi was right there in the room with him.



Her lips would kiss him, her tongue teasingly run over his nipples, her teeth nipping him to distraction. Her hands would roam all over his ready and willing naked body beneath hers. She'd tease him to a fever pitch, her cries and moans of pleasure driving him insane with lust. Then, when he would be ready to scream in frustration, she'd relinquish power to him to do with her as he pleased.

He always started the same way, he wasn't sure why. First he'd crush her to him and devour her mouth with a kiss born of desperation. Only when he felt her desperation was as high as his, would he enter her, thrusting deep inside of her in one fluid movement, until he felt their bodies merge. Desi would cling to him desperately, whispering words of love and regret, telling him how much she missed him, until they both climaxed together.

Ares shook himself out of the trance last night's dream put him under. It was the first dream he'd allowed himself in weeks. Their lovemaking had shown that. It had been quick and rough; as if they'd both craved the other's touch and couldn't wait to come together. Once they caught their breaths, they came together again, slowly this time, sensually.

He shook his head to dislodge the mental image; Desi was the last person he wanted to think about today. Today he needed to find Gaia! It was time to stop her from throwing her temper tantrums and killing his men. He couldn't rule the world as the supreme god if she destroyed it in her blind, jealous rage.

Grabbing his cloak he left his tent. "Matius, I'm leaving you in charge of this group of recruits until I return. I want them ready; we put my plans into motion the moment I get back.

"Yes, my god Ares."

"No one is to enter my tent while I am away. No matter the reason for their entrance, if I sense a single presence in there, I'll kill the culprit with my bare hands."

To put weight behind his words, Ares erected a barrier over the tent with a single wave of his hand. He didn't know how, but Desi came to him in that place and he didn't want anyone desecrating the space in his absence.

"As you wish, my god."

"I wish it!" Without a further word, Ares pulled his power around him and teleported to Mount Olympus to get answers.

He'd missed how clean things smelled this high above the earth, how his power pulsed in time to his heartbeat. It felt good to be home.

"Son?"

Ares heard the shock in his father's voice and it pleased him. An arrogant sneer stretched his features as he turned to face the King of the Gods. "Father."

"What are you doing here?"

Contempt filled him at the suspicion in the old god's voice. The man was weak, always allowing himself to be distracted by a pretty face. Ares would never let that happen to him.

"I'm here to see Gaia. Her temper tantrums are causing problems with my plans for earth. I plan to conquer that planet, and I can't do that if she tears it apart in her jealous rages."

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A weak rumble shook the air, making the ground tremble beneath their feet. "You can't conquer earth Ares, it belongs to me!"

The small malicious smile that curved his lips felt so freeing, so right. "Father, if you think you can stop me, I welcome you to try. My power grows with each new disciple that pledges himself to my cause. How is your power supply holding up since the murders? I don't see the humans calling out your name in worship."

"Ares this is madness, the world is in enough turmoil since Gaia's disappearance. The last thing those poor humans need is a war!"

"Gaia is missing?" Ares walked to the edge of Olympus and looked down on the world he planned to call his own. Looking towards the east he watched the earth tremble and open up, swallowing the trees in the area. In the west, a tidal wave crashed against the shoreline beaching a whale. Sudden storms appeared in the south drowning the crops his troops would need to survive the coming war, and in the north ice, sleet and snow pelted the humans, killing the livestock with its destructive force.

"No one has seen Gaia in months, son."

"Then she's in hiding father and she's angry. No one could control their powers the way Gaia could, and there's a rhythm to the destruction out there."

"Ares you aren't listening. Gaia disappeared months ago. Around the same time, the elements began spinning out of control. Gaia is dead, son, and the earth is mourning her loss. If we don't find the next goddess to take her place, the next

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Mother Nature..." Zeus sighed with regret. "...the earth will tear itself apart!"

Ares laughed at his father's feeble-minded fancies. No one had the power to kill a god and gods were immortal, so Gaia couldn't be dead. "I think your losing your grip on reality father. Gaia is hiding, or perhaps even being held against her will somewhere. But there is no way a goddess as powerful as she is can be dead! I will find her, and when I do, someone will answer for my wasted time."

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## Chapter 2

Desi snuggled deeper into her blankets, a feeling of peace and utter contentment washing over her. He'd finally come to her again last night, and lit a passion in her she never thought to feel again. He'd asked her to reconsider her decision and return to him, but she'd had to refuse. Innocent people needed her help and she could never walk away from people in need. Ares never understood that unyielding call she felt to help others; he'd cursed her and ordered her to stop tormenting him. That made her sad. Why did he come to her, only to reject her in the end? Was he trying to break her heart?

Ares was the one with the power to bring them together, if he didn't care for their nights together, then she wished he would stop calling her to him. She didn't have the strength to resist his call. Not when she could feel his pain and suffering, his need to hold her and be loved by her. The feel of his arms wrapped around her, the desperation to join and be one. She couldn't turn away someone she loved when she knew he was in need.

The alarm clock went off again for the third time that morning, and Desi grumbled as she finally dragged herself out of bed. She had a meeting with her new client and it would look really bad if she showed up late.

The one good thing to come out of the LA massacres was the ability to now pick and choose which jobs she wanted to take. Well, one of the good things; Ares was the best thing

that could have happened to her even if he wasn't ready to admit it yet.

The Greek God of War did not go around saving peoples lives, her father told her. He instigated people to kill others in his name, tricked or seduced them into doing his will. Never would he put his own immortality on the line to save a demi goddess, with unknown powers. Despite all that, Loki liked and approved of Ares. *Little surprise there*, Desi thought. *They're alike the two, using trickery and seduction to get their own way.* Ares wasn't like that with her. He'd tried at first, but then he'd turned kind and thoughtful, one could even say sweet and loving.

She stopped by the window to pull open the curtains to let in some fresh air and sunshine. Stepping over to the sliding door she watched the waves lazily lap up against the rocky shore, like a lover gently caressing his mate. The sound of the tide drew her back into her thoughts, lulling her into forgetting her responsibilities of the moment. The shrill sound of the alarm snapped her out of her reverie and back to reality.

Desi laughed at herself; imagine being frightened by the sound of an alarm clock. It was a good thing she knew herself well, or she'd never get out of bed in the morning. Clicking on the radio, she went to take her shower. Daydreams about Ares could wait until later; right now she needed to get ready for that meeting.

Desi peeled off her baby doll nightgown and let it drop to the floor. She never used to wear such frilly feminine things but he liked it on her, so she wore it for him.

It became habit after that; she'd wear it to bed and wake up without it. He told her once that it gave him joy when he was able to slowly remove it from her body. Who was she to deny him or herself that little bit of pleasure?

She stopped moving, her hand stilled on the shower release. Considering how angry he'd gotten this last time, perhaps she should look into finding a way of blocking his call. The pain she felt from his hateful words was too much to take. Once this meeting was over, she would ask her father for advice; it was time for her to go home, for a visit anyway.

She stepped under the spray of scalding hot water, letting it massage away her stress and worries. This case was a simple issue of a missing person. Then again, anything was simple compared to trying to find a murderer that didn't yet exist and could become anyone he chooses, anytime he chose, thanks to the gifts he'd stolen from the non humans he'd killed. The runaway was a frightened fifteen-year-old girl who'd just lost her first boyfriend in a nasty car accident. She also had amnesia from the bump on the head she received during the same accident. Desi wasn't surprised she'd run off, she would have done the same thing in her shoes.

The girl's father wanted her returned, before anything bad could happen to her. That was what Desi intended to do. Find her, calm her down and return her to her loving parent.

The shower was over in a matter of minutes; she had too much to do today to leisurely take her time getting ready as she usually did. She quickly dressed and rushed out the door to meet with her new client, then off to find her father to help her with her Ares issue. If anyone could help her find a way

around her predicament, Loki could. He wasn't a master of trickery for nothing.

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"Desdemona my dear girl, to what do I owe the pleasure of this visit?"

"Really father is that sarcasm I hear?"

"Dear girl, I am Loki, Norse God of Mischief and Trickery, and my only child insists on being so.... so ... GOOD! How am I supposed to react?"

"God? I don't recall seeing any temples dedicated in your honor?" Desi laughed at her father's award winning act of betrayal. "And I am far from being your only child! Stop being so melodramatic."

"This isn't about me Desdemona, it's about you!"

"You poor thing, how will you ever show your face again at the god soirée. You did know there was a chance I could take after my mother. You do remember her, I hope?" Loki scowled at her, making her grin widen in inherited mischief.

"Now she shows her mischievous side. What have I ever done to deserve you?"

Desi laughed until her sides ached at his well staged expression of hurt and betrayal. "Shall I list the offenses alphabetically or chronologically?" she asked wiping away her tears of laughter.



She dearly loved this man, he didn't show it often but he loved her just as much in his own way. Just taking this meeting with her proved it. Not all gods took an interest in their human born children.

"That's enough sass from you, young lady. Why are you here, my precious daughter?"

"Good Lord father, are you bored?" Desi had to sit; her father was in rare form this evening. "I'm here to ask for your advice. I seem to have a teeny little problem."

"A serious problem I'd wager since your comeback was quite weak. How can I help?"

"I need to find a way to stop a ... man from calling me to him."

The serious expression on his face made her squirm in her seat, feeling five years old all over again. "A mere man would never have enough of a hold on you to be able to ... call you, as you put it. Which of the gods is it, Desdemona?"

Desi sighed and shifted her eyes away from him. She really didn't want to have to tell him, but knew he'd keep asking and worse, refuse to help until she gave in. "It's Ares."

"Ares! Well congratulations dear girl, what a fabulous choice. He will make a fine son in law."

"Father!"

"What? He's conniving, underhanded, and smart. He's even been mischievous a time or two. He's perfect for my daughter."

Desi slowly counted to ten, reminding herself that to a god like Loki, Ares was a perfect mate for his child. "You forgot one important point."

"I have?"

"Yes Father, you have. He doesn't love me."

Loki snorted in dismissal. "Very few gods do love dear child. He wants you, he calls for you. That says more than mere words of love."

"Not for me it doesn't. I need to find a way to stop him from calling me to his side. I won't be any god's plaything, and if you won't help me, then I'll find ... other ways."

Loki narrowed his eyes at her, Desi hated when he got that look on his face. "Like what?"

"I'll ask Thor for his aid."

"That should be quite an amusing conversation. May I come along?"

Desi stood up to go. "I'm sorry I bothered you. I should have known better than to believe you would help me. If you'll excuse me."

"Sit down! If you're serious about this, then I'll do what I can to aid you. But Desdemona my dear, you will owe me dearly for this."

Desi sat, a sigh of relief escaping her lips. "Better you than Thor, father. Better you than Thor."

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### Chapter 3

Ares tossed and turned, frustrated beyond reason. It had been nearly two weeks since his dreams had taken him to Desi. No matter how hard he tried to dream of her, he couldn't. He couldn't sleep, couldn't rest.... His concentration was completely shot and he still hadn't found any trace of Gaia.

He sat up, an angry growl escaping his lips. He hated being thwarted, even in his dreams. Unless ... "Could her words have been true?"

His eyes narrowed in contemplation. His dream Desi had told him that their time together wasn't a true dream. That he called out to her and brought them together. That he'd used his excess power to turn their dream into something more substantial, something real. That she'd been innocent of his accusations, she'd merely answered his call and gave him what he desperately needed and asked for.

If all that were true, then why couldn't he call her to him now? The answer to that question returned to him with a forced blow to the gut. Their words from the last meeting came back to him.

"I don't want this Desi," he'd growled at her cruelly.

"I don't deserve that Ares. *You* came to me. *You* called to me. All I did was answer your desperate plea. If you can't just enjoy what we have without ruining it with accusations and insults, oh mighty god, then I'm not answering anymore!" He could hear the anger and the tears in her voice as she

screamed at him. "I will not be another of your playthings. Enjoy your life Ares, be happy," she'd whispered with a soft sigh. Then she was gone, and now he couldn't reach her.

"She's blocking me! That ... That ... I won't *allow* it!" he cried, his anger at her defiance causing the ground to shake beneath his feet. "How dare she defy me like this!"

Matius tore into the tent his sword drawn and at the ready to defend his saviour. "My lord, is everything alright?"

"Get out! No one is to step foot into this tent ... ever." When his voice dropped to a deadly whisper, Matius fell to his knees, his head brushing the ground with humility, and complete obedience.

"As you wish my god Ares. I'll see to it that you are never again disturbed while in the privacy of your tent."

Ares snarled at his ill temper. Seems he needed to confront his little demi goddess face to face to deal with this little issue they were having and inform her that no one treats the God of War this way. Then he'd turn his attentions back to finding Gaia and taking over the world.

"Well Desi dearest, since you seem to be avoiding me in our dreams, let's see how well you do seeing me face to face." An anxious grin split his features as he realized that Desi face to face, meant Desi skin to skin. The dream lovemaking had been intense, but he knew it wasn't anything like having her in the flesh. Ares lay back against his pillows planning how his encounter with Desi would go and closed his eyes, a lighthearted feeling washing over him at the thought of her lulling him into a restless sleep.

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Desi forced herself to stay awake and went to her kitchen for her fourth cup of coffee that night. Ares had been calling for her again and she couldn't take the pain resisting him caused her. So she took the coward's way out and stayed awake. If she was awake, he couldn't pull her to him. She'd sleep later, during the daylight hours while he worked, or after she found the girl if he persisted in this folly.

She silently opened the sliding glass door and stepped out into the cool night air, onto the deck that surrounded the second story of her home. She'd had the deck built overlooking the ocean and cliffs off her bedroom entrance in remembrance of the one in Ares' beach home.

Desi leaned against the rail and watched the waves crash, her mind processing what she'd learnt that day from the girl's father. The girl's name was Karri Whyte, aged fifteen years. Blond hair, blue eyes and about five foot two inches tall with a petite build. He'd described her as having a gymnastics physique. When she'd asked him about distinguishing marks, he said she had two.

The poor man had been beet red with humiliation when he told her about the birthmark shaped as a star under his daughter's right breast and Desi felt for him. He'd been a single parent since his wife's death, and the girl had become his entire life but she needed to know as much information as

possible no matter how painful or embarrassing. He then went on to describe the tattoo she'd gotten for her fifteenth birthday. She'd chosen a Norseman's Sword and had it inked onto her lower back.

Desi smiled. Her own family had blessed his daughter and with that blessing to track with, the girl should easily be found. In the morning she would take the photos provided and use the powers her father claimed she possessed to attempt to sense the girl's presence. Karri's memory was another story and one the girl would need professional help in regaining.

Desi watched the sun rise over the ocean with a never-ending sense of awe. *The dawning of a new day*, she thought with a chuckle, a sudden feeling of exhaustion washing over her. "Well it should be safe to get an hour or two of sleep."

Pouring out the remainder of her coffee over the deck rail Desi returned inside to bed. Stripping out of her clothing, she grabbed for the baby doll nightie and stopped herself. "No, I need to break all ties, all reminders including this. Especially this!" She reverently ran her fingers over the red silky fabric. This had been the first thing Ares had ever gifted her with and it was her favorite. She would miss wearing it.

With a sad sigh of regret, Desi crawled into her bed naked. She took her pillow into her arms and cuddled it to herself, pretending just for tonight it was his arms she was in, that he was holding her safe watching over her as she fell fast asleep.

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Ares was furious when he finally appeared in her bedchamber. Not only had she blocked him from her dream self, she'd warded her home against him. He'd expended an insane amount of power breaking through her defenses, which were surprisingly strong. The realization that he once again had the power to spare for something so utterly frivolous just because he wished it made him smile in triumph.

Her scent hit him first; it was as sweet and heady as he remembered with just an undertone of spice. His eyes closed as feelings of want and desire washed over him. He'd gone too long without a woman in his bed if she was affecting him this way, far too long. No, he corrected. He'd been too long without her in his arms. Tonight he would correct that lapse.

He walked over to the bed where he sensed her slumbering form and felt rage take over. She was lying with her arms around another. "Rule number one Desi! No other men!" he roared roughly pulling the blankets off her, completely ignoring that he'd broken the rules of their challenge first.

Desi never woke. She simply turned towards him, his name on her lips. Allowing him to see that she was completely alone and as beautiful as ever.

Looking down at her, all thoughts of Gaia and ultimate power flew from his mind. Ares stripped out of his clothing in

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record time, replaced the blanket over her shivering body and climbed in beside her. Once he'd settled himself comfortably, he pulled her into his arms. A smug smile settled over his lips when she cuddled against his chest. This woman was his and his alone. That was one lesson she was about to learn for good. Feeling victorious he closed his eyes and joined her in sleep.

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## Chapter 4

Desi woke slowly, knowing instinctively she wasn't alone any longer. She could feel the strong arms holding her tight and smell the heady musky scent that washed over her. She knew exactly who was in her bed; she'd recognize the way his body fit around her anywhere. The knowledge that she should be angry with him for breaking into her home was there in the back of her mind, but she just couldn't seem to call up that emotion.

She was happy he was there. He'd come after her, fought through all her wards and barriers to be with her. That meant something; she just wasn't sure what yet. Desi wasn't foolish enough to think that this meant he loved her. Ares was too proud to ever admit that. He was only here because she'd avoided his call and he didn't like to be ignored.

Still, he never woke her when he arrived, and that shocked her a little. Desi tested her bonds and laughed silently. Ares had her wrapped up so tightly in his arms, she couldn't move. When she did get an inch away he tightened his hold, bringing her back flush to his body. Every time he did that, a shiver of desire ran up her spine. Well there was only one way out of the situation he'd placed her. After all, this wasn't the first time she'd encountered his grip of death.

She leaned in close and lightly kissed his lips. Ares immediately released her, positioning himself for a more intimate embrace. Desi hesitated for a split second torn between the need to have him and her need to break his hold

over her before firming her resolve and quietly slipping out of bed. Quickly getting dressed she escaped out of her home before he could wake.

Yes she was happy that Ares had come for her, ecstatic really, but he hadn't asked her permission to enter her home or her bed and he still hadn't apologized for his cruel words. She wouldn't give in to what he truly wanted from her until he did at the very least that.

She didn't make it three blocks before a very angry, very naked God of War appeared in front of her. "Why Ares, you look positively happy to see me!"

"Not funny Desi, not funny at all."

She watched a deep scowl come over his face, and gave him an impish grin in return. "From here it is. Oh look, it missed me. It's standing up and everything." Ares was not amused by her witty remark.

"Care to tell me exactly why you left my bed, without a word and where you think you're going?"

"Care to tell me why I found a naked god in my bed when I know damned well I turned on the supernatural alarms before going to sleep?"

Ares smiled his thousand watt smile and spread his arms wide. "You were avoiding me, and I wanted to prove to myself I could do it."

"Good for you. Now don't you think you should return before some woman decides to have her way with your body?" She knew she was gritting her teeth in frustration, while she forced a smile. But she was really bothered that other women were eyeing her man, correction her god!

"Only if you return with me."

"I have an appointment I need to keep." Desi smiled; Ares was scowling at her again, she much preferred him when he scowled. She knew where she stood with him when he did that.

"I'll come with you. We need to discuss something that could mean the difference between life and death for the entire planet."

Desi narrowed her eyes in disbelief. "Ares I don't have time for your..."

"Gaia is missing and if she isn't found soon, the earth will tear itself apart. Desi, my sweet little demi goddess, I need your help to find her."

Desi bristled at his pet name for her, he knew she hated it. "If you're lying to me Ares, I swear..."

"I'm not lying. You can check with your father if you don't trust me."

"I don't trust you." Crossing her arms over her chest Desi scowled at him, "...and I'm not going to help you if you don't go home to get dressed right this instant."

"Give me your hand Desi."

The silkiness of his voice almost lured her into his arms. "What for? I have things to do. You go get dressed then come find me."

"No Desi. You come with me now, and I'll help you with your errand, then you can help me with my problem."

Desi didn't want to go anywhere near him. She knew that look and she didn't trust his smirk. His problem was plainly evident, and getting more evident the longer they stood

there. Unfortunately he wasn't backing down and they were starting to draw a crowd. "Fine but no funny stuff, I have a scared, lost little girl to find."

Reluctantly holding out her hand she let him pull her into his arms. When her body pressed tightly against his chest, it felt like coming home. She heard the envious sighs from the women around them as his hands roamed down her back to cup her ass, pulling her pelvis closer to him. "I'm sorry my sweet little demi goddess, for everything I said the last time we were together. Can you forgive me?"

Desi rested her head on his chest, all the fight seeping out of her. How could she stay mad now? "I forgive you, and I'll help you find Gaia; after I find my missing girl."

Ares never said yea or nay to her. One minute they were on the street, the next he was kissing her and they were both back in her bed, Ares above her, his weight pinning her to the mattress. One hand up her shirt expertly fondled her breast, while the other hand undid the buttons keeping the shirt closed. Desi was enjoying every single second of it. Never once stopping the kiss, Ares undid her pants and slid his hand inside. Desi moaned in desire, he always did know how to make her forget everything but him and the pleasure he knew how to give her so well.

"Desi lift your ass so I can get these off you." His voice was throaty and raw with emotions; Ares was just as affected by this as she was. Obeying, she lifted her ass off the bed, her hands exploring his body greedily. Ares didn't waste a second, the moment she'd raised herself up, he yanked her jeans down. "From now on you're wearing skirts, lover."

Nature's Whim  
*by Aline de Chevigny*

The desperation in his tone made her laugh in amusement, then gasp in pure pleasure when he entered her, bringing them together. He laid motionless, murmuring incoherent words between kisses. "Gods I've missed you Desi."

Desi grabbed a fist full of hair, dragged his face down to hers and kissed him. She didn't want to talk. Unlike Ares, she hadn't had other lovers since they parted ways, and she'd missed the intimacy.

Ares chuckled giving in to her demands; she liked it when he was malleable to her wishes.

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## Chapter 5

"So tell me about this child you're searching for Desi?" Ares refused to let her out of his arms. He liked the feelings that washed over him when he held her.

"She's a teen Ares, not a child. She was in a car accident a while back, her boyfriend died and she lost her memory. She's scared and doesn't know who to trust, so she ran off. She's been blessed by my people, so I'm going to use that bond to track her. That's what I was off to do when you waylaid me earlier. I hope you're happy with yourself, leaving that poor defenseless girl all alone out there so you could satiate your appetites."

Ares laughed. Desi was being her loveable self. Gods he'd missed her. "Might I remind you, that you pulled out a good handful of my hair in your eagerness to satiate your own appetites, my sweet little demi goddess."

"I hate it when you call me that. There's no proof that I inherited my father's immortality or godhood."

"Again might I remind you, that you once stopped a full god in his tracks. You blocked a god's call and..."

"And?"

*And you stole my heart, you little vixen,* he thought incredulously as insight struck him speechless.

"Ares? And what?"

"What? Oh sorry. You single-handedly stopped a golem intent from taking my immortal soul. Only you my sweet woman could do all that."

Desi blushed speechless; Ares knew he'd never complimented her this way before. He hadn't been able to control his possessive urges towards her and she looked a mite confused. He needed to show her that he really did want her for her and not just the sex, cause the sex was good between them, really, really good ... okay the sex was out of this world amazing.

Cuddling closer, Desi, placing a kiss on his neck. The grin she gave him when he reacted exactly the way she expected boiled his blood. He growled playfully and pinned her back against the mattress. "You are insatiable today, my sweet."

"Are you complaining, oh mighty god Ares? It's been a long time for me."

"Never!" he whispered kissing her lips softly before he ravaged her a little more. "I missed you Desi."

Desi's laugh sounded like disbelief. "You missed the sex, not me. If you found someone else who satisfied you in bed as much as I did, you wouldn't have given me a second thought."

Fury enveloped him; he couldn't believe that she trusted him so little. He scowled at her with all the pent up anger and hurt he felt at her words. "Hell woman..."

"Okay, what's the angry look for?"

"That's what you think of me?" Ares got out of bed and stalked across the room, trying to calm his rage.

Desi was so shocked by his actions that she slowly sat up against the headboard pulling the sheet up to cover herself, confusion evident in her beautiful brown eyes. "I didn't mean

it as an insult, Ares. I was just pointing out a well documented fact."

"Of course you meant it Desi, or you wouldn't have said it. You think I'm with you only because you are the most amazing woman I've ever had in my bed."

Desi was ready to panic; he could see it in her eyes. He'd witnessed her panic attacks more than once and it never boded well for him.

"Come back to bed Ares, hold me while I attempt to find the runaway?" Her plea was the last thing he expected from her. It caught him so completely off guard he just stared at her in shocked surprise. A look that Desi obviously didn't enjoy seeing because she reacted like he'd slapped her and shrank back against the headboard. "Forget I asked. I should go shower anyway and track her out there in the street. It will make my readings clearer if I'm alone."

Ares could tell she was lying to him as she tried to slip out of bed without looking in his direction. He moved to intercept her before she could take more than one running step. "Oh no, you don't!" he whispered pulling her close to his body. He could feel her heart racing with the close contact and smell the worry she felt over what he was about to say next. He couldn't stop wondering what she was hiding from him.

"Really Ares it's fine, I was wrong to say it. It wasn't being fair to you. Just because you acted that way in the past doesn't mean you're still like that now."

"No it wasn't fair, but it is how you feel. You still don't trust me, do you? Tell me Desi, why do you stay with me if you



don't trust me? Is the only thing you want from me my body?"

Desi blushed beet red. "Technically I didn't stay Ares, and you did bed the first woman you saw the moment I left. I'll admit that I do adore your body; I love the way it tastes and smells, the way it moves and feels around me. I've never quite seen or felt another like it, even among the gods..."

"Dammit Desi..." Ares stiffened when she put her arms around him so he couldn't walk away from her.

"But the truth is it's not your body I adore. It's that devious mind of yours that attracts me. I can't seem to resist it. You can talk me into doing things I'd never do on my own."

"My mind?" Ares was in shock, he wasn't sure how to take her words. No other woman had ever wanted anything from him other than his body and the intense sexual pleasure he could give them. Now he understood how she'd captured his heart. "Come here you, infuriating woman. Can we please agree that more than just sex attracts us to each other?"

"If I say yes ... will you take me back to bed?"

Ares fought to stop the smile that kept trying to break past his lips. "Only if you mean it." The frown that swept over her face, making her lips pout, was nearly irresistible to him.

"Why you insufferable oaf, you stand there and doubt my words? Get out Ares. Get out of my room. Get out of my house! I knew I should never have let you get me into bed."

Ares couldn't contain his mirth any longer; laughter erupted from him. Her face turned stormy and he knew he'd made a mistake. "Out. Now!"

He pulled her closer, nuzzling her neck, nipping at her sensitive spot, knowing she couldn't stay mad at him while he did that. "Doesn't feel good to have someone you care about doubt your word does it, my sweet?"

Ares could tell the moment she stopped trying to fight him, fight against the feelings he invoked in her, and grinned mischievously. He felt her resolve give in as her arms went up around his neck and her lips sought out his. "Admit it my sweet, you love my body as much as my mind."

"One more word out of you, your Godliness and you'll be standing out in the hallway naked."

Ares laughed at her threat. He much preferred his Desi feisty to insecure. The fact that he could make her feel insecure thrilled him more than he thought it would. The realization that he'd teased her enough for one night, and that he needed to change a few misconceptions between them if she was ever going to take him seriously concerning their future and his feelings for her, occurred to him.

Her very talented hands were distracting him beyond the ability to form a thought. Tomorrow he'd implement phase two of his plan. He needed her by his side if he were going to rule as supreme god. Tonight he was going to make love to her until she couldn't think straight and the only coherent word he wanted to hear on her lips this night, was his name.

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## Chapter 6

The next morning Ares woke early; he loved watching Desi sleep. He'd completely tired her out the night before, but even more satisfying to his ego was how she clung to him for the rest of the night; as if she was afraid he'd disappear if she let him go, not that he had any plans to go anywhere without her.

"Open your eyes my sweet, it's time to find that little girl you're searching for."

Desi mumbled and turned over, her body now lying above his, gently pinning him in place. Ares grinned at the completely possessive act. He wanted to take her up on the offer she was clearly making, but he knew that he'd waylaid her yesterday and when the euphoria of their lovemaking wore off, if anything had happened to the child she was tracking, she'd never forgive herself or him. That was no way to start their relationship anew. She'd be grateful to him later for thinking of the child first. Grateful enough to let him tumble her back into bed for another round or two.

"Come on, my sweet little love, time to get that perfect little ass out of bed. You go shower and I'll fetch us some breakfast."

Her hand slid seductively up his chest to stop him from getting out of bed. "You shower with me." The words were mumbled so seductively into his chest hair, he almost gave in.

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by Aline de Chevigny

Ares shivered at the contact. She wasn't making this easy and he knew what would happen if he let her win. "That is an extremely bad idea Desi. Now get in the shower this instant." Before she could disagree he teleported across the room, and grabbed his clothes. Desi turned over with a grin of total satisfaction spreading across her face that made Ares force himself to keep going. He teleported out of the hotel to get their breakfast, knowing what a serious waste of power his act had cost him, but a necessary waste. He had no control when it came to that woman and she would probably be the death of him.

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Desi sat on the bed toweling her hair, Ares had been gone far longer than necessary and she couldn't sit around waiting for him. Leaning back she closed her eyes and extended her senses the way her father had taught her. Taking a deep calming breath, she pictured the sword tattoo, noting that it looked extremely familiar to her senses, then focused out and had the image *pop* like a soap bubble before her.

When Ares finally returned he found her frustrated and near tears. Desi was frantically throwing clothing into a bag getting ready to leave.

"Where are you going? What happened?" When Desi didn't slow down her frantic packing or even acknowledge his presence, Ares grabbed her. "Talk to me dammit!"

"Ares? When? No! You can't be here yet. I'm so sorry. I have to go. I've wasted too much time already."

"Stop that! Now sit down and explain."

"I can't, I have to go find her. I promise I'll be back to help you find Gaia as soon as I finish this job. Then my time is all yours."

"Dammit woman, let me help you."

"You, are too much of a distraction. The second I stop being on my guard around you, you'll have me naked and in bed again. I just don't have the energy to resist you."

Ares laughed in amusement. She knew him too well, the minx, but this was far more than that. Something big happened while he was out to cause such a drastic change in his Desi. "Desi my sweet, you know me well, but I give you my word as a god that..."

At the word god Desi shrank back from him, and things started to fall into place. She'd tried to use her new gifts to find the girl and failed. She was pulling away from him and he needed to let her leave if he was ever going to keep her. "Fine you win. I'll see you tonight, when you come back to rest."

"Uhhmm, yeah sure, tonight. I really need to go now Ares."

One of the things he loved about Desi was her complete inability to lie. He could always tell when she tried to hide

something from him. Like now, she had no intention of returning to him tonight.

Ares sat on the edge of the dresser watching her pack. He decided to let her go for now and appear in her bed that night and every night until she understood that he wasn't going anywhere. Then once she stopped running from him, he would change his tactics and stay away until she came to him. "Till tonight then!"

"Yeah tonight."

Ares bit back a grin when she had to forcefully stop herself from running out the door, turn back and kiss him goodbye before leaving so he wouldn't get suspicious. She made sure that the kiss was long and slow. Her way of saying goodbye. He knew that cause he'd been on the receiving end of it once before. It took all his will power not to crush her to him and deepen the kiss so she wouldn't leave him again.

\* \* \* \*



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The minute she was outside the door, she had to stop and catch her breath. She leaned back against the door for support as her legs threatened to give out on her. That had been the hardest thing she'd ever had to do. Having trouble breathing, Desi held onto the doorframe for support and she hadn't even left the hotel yet. She thought she'd broken free of his hold the last time she left, boy had she been wrong;

she hadn't broken free, just postponed the inevitable. One night, one lousy night back in his bed and she'd completed her downfall. She'd gone and fallen in love with him. The dope!

*You or him?* Her subconscious asked irritating her further.

Hearing footsteps she pushed herself away from the wall and headed out. She'd been stupid to think she could find the girl using powers that were hit and miss to begin with. To think her father could be right, that she had inherited his talents, his immortality...

Falling for Ares had been foolish. When she started to age, grow old, he'd lose interest and start searching for his next conquest, someone younger, someone new.

Desi shook the heartbreaking thoughts away; time enough to worry about that later. After the young woman was safe back with her father.

She started her search at the hospital where the girl had disappeared. If Desi was one thing, she was thorough. She started at the top of her list of hospital employees and worked her way down. Her best lead came from an orderly who'd not only seen the girl, he'd talked to her. Seems the girl was asking for directions to a local kid's hang out.

Desi knew that was a good sign, it meant she was starting to regain parts of her memory. Bad news was that two days had passed since then. While she'd been in a state of perpetual bliss in Ares arms, the child's trail had grown cold. She still couldn't believe that the orderly never thought it important to report seeing the girl, even after it was known she was missing.

By the end of the night Desi had followed the girl's trail through half of the city and still wasn't any closer to finding her. She had one more lead to follow before calling it a night and crawling into a cold empty bed as far from Ares as possible. The girl had been seen entering a temple, but not just any temple. She'd been seen entering Thor's temple. Seemed she'd be seeing him whether she wanted to or not, because the moment she stepped foot in his temple he'd know. Worse Ares would know she'd visited his rival and he wouldn't be happy.

With a flash of insight she couldn't explain, she knew whom the sword belonged to; it was Thor's sword. Things had just gotten a bit more complicated. Steeling her shoulders and taking a deep breath, Desi started up the stairs, only to find her entrance blocked by a royally pissed off Greek God of War.

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## Chapter 7

"Ares." Desi quickly backed down the stairs, startled at seeing him there. She hadn't expected him to be able to sense her until it was too late for him to stop her.

"Desi!"

Gathering her courage around her like a cloak, Desi stepped forward. "I need you to move out of my way Ares. This is the last place I know of that the girl went."

"You are joking, right? You can't seriously expect me to step aside so you can enter my rival's temple? To let him have you without a fight?"

Desi couldn't believe how calm he sounded. He hadn't raised his voice, scowled, glared, or ordered her away from Thor's temple even once. In short he was making it very difficult for her to keep her determination to stay away from him. "I know whose temple this is Ares. Thor and I know each other quite well."

She saw his eyes narrow and felt his aura darken, his only outwards signs of anger and forced herself not to wince at her deliberately hurtful words used to send him away.

"To be expected, as you are the daughter of the man he owes much to!"

"Ares, I don't want to fight. We have two options here. Either you let me enter so I can gather the information I need."

"Or?"

"Or you go in to ask for me." They were at a stalemate and they both knew it.

"I can't enter this temple without an invitation, my sweet. I know you're aware of that little rule, and I can't let you enter without wearing my token. I wouldn't want Thor to get any ideas!"

"Not to worry Greek. I've already had the pleasure, and if it weren't for you, I'd still have it."

Desi blanched the minute she heard the silky voice. Not able to look Ares in the eyes over Thor's words, she looked down at her shoes in embarrassment. She'd never wanted him to learn of her failed relationship with Thor. The knowledge that she hadn't been good enough for one War God terrified her, for now Ares knew she also wasn't good enough for him.

"When?"

She knew that calm, monosyllabic tone. Ares was furious, far angrier than he'd been with her earlier for attempting to enter Thor's temple.

"Now really Greek, you should know that a lady never tells."

Desi stepped forward to distract Ares from Thor's words. "Enough Thor! Is Karri Whyte still here?"

"No, I sent her on a retreat."

"Where did you send her? Her father is worried sick."

"I told you that one day you'd come back to me Desi. If you want that information all you need to do is enter my temple and tell me you're mine."

Desi sighed and took a step forward in defeat. There was no other way to find the girl. Thor would tire of her again eventually, and Ares would be better off without her.

"No, Norseman! She's mine." Strong arms wrapped themselves around her waist lifting her off the temple stairs and away from Thor. "You blocked her power Norseman. I couldn't figure out why a woman with as much power as she has couldn't track an acolyte of her own people. Now I know. You blocked her for your own selfish gains. All so you could get her here. So you could coerce her to come back to you and steal her from me."

"Ares, no, Thor would never..." The sheepish look on Thor's face stopped her cold. "Thor?"

"He doesn't deserve you, lover."

Desi was furious that Thor was purposefully trying to bait Ares. Pulling away from the handsome Greek God, Desi stalked towards Thor with fury in every step. "You're wrong Thor, you have it backwards. I'm the one that doesn't deserve him. There, are you happy? It's out in the open now. You, on the other hand, don't deserve me, after what you've done to me! If Ares is even remotely correct about your being responsible for my failure to track Karri Whyte, you will regret it."

"Really lover, you know the rules. A god can't track an acolyte in the temple of her chosen god. I didn't have to block you, the fact that the child was in my temple while you attempted to search for her did it for me."

Desi didn't miss a single word Thor said, nor how Ares slipped his arms possessively around her waist the second time Thor called her lover. "I am no god!"

"True, but you are a goddess in your own right, and your power is growing. Soon you will be powerful enough for me to have at my side. Powerful enough to support me in my quest."

Desi stiffened at his words. He only wanted her for the power she possessed and not because he cared for her. Was that how Ares felt also? "Is she still here Thor?"

"No!"

"Where is she?"

"To learn that lover..."

"Stop calling me that!"

"Very well Desdemona if you insist, but to learn that information you must agree to be mine again. Forever!"

The grip Ares had around her waist began to get painful.

"Does she have your word as a god that Karri Whyte is not in any of your temples?" His tone was thick with anger and perhaps even a tinge of hurt and insecurity.

"I give Desdemona my word."

Desi expected Ares to rant, rave and teleport them as far away from this temple as possible. So when he gently lowered his head to kiss her neck and whisper in her ear, she wanted to do more than kiss him.

"Thor I need a few days to think it over, and as long as she's under your personal protection, she's safe."

Thor frowned at her suspiciously. Desi leaned back against Ares strong chest and smiled. "Because if anything happens to the girl, I will never forgive you!"

His frown deepened, as he understood the flaw in his plan. Desi smiled at him sweetly, then turned in Ares arms and kissed him seductively. Ares didn't waste a second; he wrapped his arms around her more securely and teleported them back to her hotel.

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## Chapter 8

Ares kept his smile of victory to himself, he almost lost her tonight and he wasn't out of the woods yet. He fully admitted to himself that learning about Desi and Thor angered him, but he hadn't been an innocent virgin when he'd met her or after her either. Tonight he'd make certain she forgot all about blondie boy.

"Do you really think it will work?"

"What?" His silly obsession over her past relationship with the blond mental patient had him completely distracted. It was time to focus on what she was telling him.

"Karri Whyte, do you really think I'll be able to track her?"

"With my power boosting yours if you need it, you'd be able to track me if you wanted to."

"Okay let's do this then, before Thor catches on."

Ares took her hand and lead her back to their bed. *The bed*. He corrected himself sternly. Their bed is now and always will be back at his beach house, and that is where he planned to take her when they'd found Gaia. Desi will be by his side when he ruled, that was the only certainty he could foresee. A seductive smile curved his lips when she put up no resistance to his desired destination.

He knew she would never allow him to distract her until after she'd found the missing girl, or at least made a valid attempt to find her, but he couldn't resist the irony of using the bed to rescue the child from Thor. Pulling Desi down onto

the bed so that she could use him as a backrest while she placed herself in a trance to find the girl, Ares held her close.

"Okay here goes ... everything."

"Desi my sweet, before you start, I just want you to think on one thing. You're mine, with or without powers. I'll never let you go without a fight. Thor can never have you back."

Her breathing quickened at his words, he knew he'd gotten through to her for now and tonight she wouldn't try to run from him. "Are you sure?"

Ares laughed. "Positive my sweet, I plan on keeping you around for a very, very long time."

The mischievous glint in her eyes put him on automatic alert. "And what if I don't want to stay?"

"Don't..." Ares saw red at her rejection. "Desdemona Carpenter you need me! You dream of me when I'm not around! Don't want to stay? I never want to hear you speak such words again. Of course you want to stay with me. When this is over my sweet, you will wear my token."

He watched her face carefully as he spoke, okay ranted at her. He saw neither argument nor denial there. Actually he saw nothing on her features and that frightened him more than dealing with an entire army bent on his blood.

"Comments, my sweet?"

The quiet thoughtful look she got at his question unnerved him. He didn't like the feelings of insecurity she was forcing him to acknowledge. "Desi?"

"Sorry, I'm just wondering when the proposal comes?"

"Proposal?" Desi smiled knowingly when his voice squeaked on the simple word. The minx! She'd set him up.

"Well you have been telling everyone we know or meet that I belong to you. You've just ordered me to wear your token. So where is my proposal? Where are your words of love? Do you need me, Ares? Do you dream of me, when I'm not around? Do you want me..." Desi started laughing and cupped his face. "Sorry Ares, you can stop looking at me like you're ready to bolt now. The door is there any time you want to use it. I won't ever stop you."

The minx was testing him again, trying to scare him away. He knew her questions weren't in jest, he felt the seriousness and the weight behind the words she spoke. She tried to pretend that it didn't matter to her, but he knew better. He'd learnt better. "I'm not going anywhere! I do need you. I nearly went mad when I couldn't be with you any longer. It affected me so deeply that I came after you." Releasing his grip on her, he gently rubbed feeling back into her arms.

"Oh my! I never knew."

"And I'll always want you. But now is not the time. Let's search for this child." The happy surprise on her face urged him forward. "Then we can make love until you're lying limp in my arms from exhaustion."

"You're hopeless, you big loveable oaf. Now kiss me so I can snuggle back into your arms without the distraction of craving your touch, while I try this tracking thing again."

Ares chuckled at her serious tone. "Kiss you? Is that an order, my sweet little demi goddess?"

"Most definitely."

Ares enthusiastically complied with her wishes, leaving a blissful look etched on her features when he broke off the



kiss, making him smile with pride. When she leaned into him, it was obvious that her mind wasn't on her duties, as her hands roamed possessively over his chest under his designer silk shirt.

"Oh that was a mistake, being around you is bad for business, love," she murmured drowsily.

Ares knew he had to escalate his plans soon. He needed her and Thor wanted her back. Calling him love had been a slip of the tongue, a slip he knew he wasn't supposed to have heard, yet it confirmed his suspicions. She loved him, but still didn't trust him. "Desi my sweet, open those lovely baby blues. You still have work to do before you rest." A soft sigh was the only response he got. "Perhaps I should leave until you've completed this assignment."

"No, please stay."

Knowing she couldn't see him Ares let his wolfishly grin free, his plan was working perfectly. "Then you'd best get to work before the Norseman realizes that you've outsmarted him."

"Okay." Desi sat up and pulled away from him. Closing her eyes she started her breathing exercises, just like she'd been taught by her sensei then reached out with her mind, searching. He knew the moment she made contact, her body stiffened and a surprised "oh" escaped her lips.

"I found her. Oh Ares I found her ... there's ... there's a war hammer on the pommel of the sword on the tattoo. I never even saw it on the photograph."

"That's because it's invisible to the naked eye. It's hidden, love. A sword is the universal token symbol we war gods give

to those we hold dear or special. But each token holds a secret symbol on the pommel telling other gods or goddesses..." he added with a proud grin. "...whom that person is protected by or belongs to."

"So what would yours be?"

"Mine is a red skull."

"You want me to have a sword with a skull hidden in its pommel tattooed to my butt?"

Ares laughed. "It would be placed a little more visibly than that my sweet. The other gods need to see it to know you're taken."

"Oh they'll see it, I've always wanted to moon a few of those stuck up gods and goddesses."

Ares couldn't stop laughing, he hadn't been this happy in ages. "I'd prefer you keep that delectable backside for my eyes only if you don't mind."

"Oh fine, spoil all my fun. Ares, can we go get Karri now and bring her back to her father?"

"Do you still have a lock on her location?"

He watched as she closed her eyes to verify and firm her connection. "Yes, I have her, what do I need to do ... Oh Ares."

Ares waited until she told him she had the location, then pulled her onto his lap and fused his lips to hers sending her a boost of power. With his mind, he showed her how to manipulate that power and send them to the exact location of the missing girl. He didn't have to kiss her to lend her the power, but he certainly enjoyed doing it this way.

The moment they appeared, Karri Whyte screamed and fell to her knees in obeisance. Blushing scarlet at scaring the poor girl, Desi untangled herself from his hold and rushed over to her. "Karri, it's okay sweetheart. I'm here to bring you back to your father."

"But ... but..."

"It's okay sweetheart, really, what is it?"

"Thor is my god and he bade me to stay away until he captured his queen."

Ares sensed the exact moment Desi saw red at Thor's manipulation. Her entire aura burned red in anger. Walking over he laid his hand on her shoulder to ground her.

"Well Karri, since I'm the queen Thor wishes to capture, that means you can come back with me now and I'll deal with Thor after I get you back to your father. He's worried sick about you."

"I miss him too. Yes, I think I'd like to go home, if my god Thor won't be angry with me."

"I'll deal with Thor, leave him to me."

Ares was very proud of his sweet little demi goddess and the way she took charge of the situation.

"Come, it's time we took you home." Desi held out her hand to the terrified girl, and only when she felt Karri's touch did she turn to back to him. "Ares, do you think you have it in you to make one more trip?"

"For you my sweet, anything. You can help me replenish the power later tonight..." He leaned forward to whisper the rest, "by crying out my name in bed tonight."

The light blush that crept up her cheeks told him more than words how she felt about his request. He gathered her close and let her manipulate his powers to teleport them to the girl's father.

Once the reunion was complete and thanks given, Ares pulled Desi flush to his body and teleported them back to his beach house where he knew they wouldn't be interrupted until he was ready to let her out of his bed. Desi had a lot of power to help him replenish and he planned on having a good time while doing it. Tomorrow they could start their search for Gaia; tonight Desi was all his.

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## Chapter 9

Desi sat in her room fighting against her urge to go to Ares. He'd been acting very peculiar for weeks, so sweet and loving, always making sure she didn't want for anything.

Weeks and still no closer to finding Gaia, and he didn't mind. Weeks of his not popping into her bed without warning, weeks without teasing and tormenting her till she screamed for mercy. Weeks without making her cry out in total ecstasy.

Gods, she missed having him in her bed. But tonight he'd flashed his sexiest grin, then kissed her until she thought she'd melt into a puddle of want and desire at his feet, only to ask her to come to him when she felt ready.

For two hours she'd paced, sat, opened and closed her half of the dividing door between their rooms, then paced some more. She felt like her skin was on fire, from needing him so badly. That thought stopped her pacing. "Damn, the man is right. I need him!"

Desi grinned happily. "I need him, so I'm going to get him ... at least for tonight. Can't think long term where Ares is concerned, it's asking for trouble when you do."

Desi hummed as she got ready to rock his world with the red silk teddy she thought she'd never wear again, that she'd made him take her home to pack in secret. The matching panties and garter went on next and just for Ares, the silky black nylons he so adored to round out the outfit.

She looked herself over in the mirror. "I wonder if you'll approve, my hunky god?" With a last glance in the mirror,

she opened his half of the dividing door and entered Ares' room.

What she saw stopped her in her tracks on the threshold, her good humor drying up in her throat. A beautiful blonde woman was draped across him in his bed. She was slowly kissing her way down his chest, and he was lying there not moving a muscle. Her mind flashed back to the first time she'd ever seen him, lying on the beach in a lawn chair, his head thrown back while a woman in a very tiny bikini gave him head. Desi looked the woman over and admitted to herself that this woman was more deserving of a god's affections than she could ever be.

She must have made a sound to alert them to her presence, for before she could make a move the blonde was forcefully knocked onto the floor and Ares sat up in the bed, staring at her in confusion.

"Desi..."

"No don't, if you were tired of me you could have just said so, or continued to avoid my bed at night Ares. This..." A tiny sob escaped her throat. "This was just plain cruel."

"Desi, sweetheart, I never..."

"Stop! Just stop. Stay away from me Ares. Just stay far away. I never want to see you again."

"Desi..."

She couldn't stand to hear the pleading in his voice, couldn't bear to be so close to him. Not tonight, maybe not ever again. Before she could think, she was back in her own home as far away from Ares as she could get without leaving

the planet. She didn't even question how she got there. She just felt grateful to whatever deity had teleported her home.

Sobbing uncontrollably, she tore off her outfit and threw it over the balcony onto the rocks below, never wanting to see it again. Sliding to the ground of the balcony, she watched the ocean waves crash violently against the surf, the waves getting bigger and bigger, leaving more destruction in their wake with every crash. Her tears fell so fast, her vision started to get blurry.

"Desi darling, you should dress like that more often!"

"Get out Thor! I'm not in the mood."

His strong hands came down on her shoulders. "Looks to me like you are. Let me ease your pain."

Desi shrugged his hands off her shoulders, got up and stepped around him instantly suspicious of his motives. She'd been played by him once before, she would never again fall for his lies or any other gods'. "What makes you think I'm in pain? Better question..." she asked stepping towards the entrance to her rooms. "What are you doing here?"

"Can't a friend stop in to say hello?"

"Thor! I know you don't have the power to spare. Stop lying to me." Desi was not in the mood to deal with him or his games.

"I felt your pain and wanted to comfort you. That's the truth."

"Get. Out. Now! I am not in the mood for uninvited company."

"I could make you feel better, if you..."

She backed away from him until her back was pressed up against the railing. "Thor if you move one more inch, I swear I will find a way to turn you into a eunuch." The fact that Thor was still there even after her threats raised her suspicions about his motives another notch.

"So feisty and strong. So perfect..."

"Thor, my daughter asked you to leave. I suggest you obey her wishes."

"Loki! What are you doing here?"

Desi had never felt as grateful as she did right at that moment for her father's interference in her life. "Hello father." Loki handed her a robe, which she put on gratefully.

"Desdemona, care to explain why Ares is laying waste to the countryside? Not to mention cornering every god who's ever shown you any interest and a few who haven't? Demanding answers to questions most don't even understand."

"The fool's probably finally lost it."

Loki smiled coldly. "No, the man is as sane as ever a war god can be. He's searching for someone."

"I have no idea Father." Desi's first instinct was to go to him, make certain he was alright. This was out of character for Ares and it worried her. Then his betrayal returned and she felt ill.

"None, Desdemona?"

"She just told you..."

"Thor I told you to leave. Now!"



She saw the annoyance over her order, and the slow calculated smile that replaced it. That smile scared her like nothing else could.

"As you wish, little one."

Desi watched as Thor teleported away before turning back to her father.

"Now, Desdemona, tell me why Ares is trying to tear the world apart, and who he is searching for."

"I wish I knew father ... I wish I knew."

\* \* \* \*



\* \* \* \*

Ares grabbed the girl by the hair, pulling her up off the floor with a snarl of lethal outrage. "Who are you and what in Olympus were you doing in my bed, wench?"

"My god, please, tell me how I have displeased you? What may I do for you? I only wish to pleasure you. I'll do anything you ask of me."

Ares wanted to strangle her, if only to put an end to her whimpering. Knowing how angry Desi would be if he hurt a human he settled for yanking her head closer so she could see the rage in his eyes. "Who sent you here?"

"I don't understand, my god."

Snarling, he released her and paced away before he lost control and killed the wench. "Don't play games with me,

wench. Give me the name of the person who sent you to my bed!"

"But t'was you, my god. I was taken from your temple, and told that you wished me to pleasure you as the last woman you bedded had failed."

Ares' rage turned deadly and left him seeing blood at the deceit being played against him. Whoever had set him up knew his tastes well. This wench was exactly the type of woman he'd favored in the past. Blonde, buxom, stupid beyond reason and willing to do anything he wished. She just destroyed all hope he had of winning Desi.

Desi, his smart, vivacious, dark haired, brown eyed beauty. His sweet little demi goddess who called him out when he was out of line. Who stood by his side in battle and watched his back.

"I will find out whom you serve wench, then I'll be back. For now get out of my sight."

The still whimpering girl quickly stood up, gathered her clothing and ran out of the room clutching them to her breasts. Ares watched her go with disgust.

*Desi would never have acted that way.* Thoughts of Desi reminded him that she hadn't walked out on him this time; she'd teleported herself out. *She could be anywhere, with anyone by now ...* That thought didn't sit well. Desi was his.

He had to find her, explain ... No first he needed proof that he hadn't betrayed her. Then he'd make the guilty party pay dearly for their actions. Right before tearing them limb from limb.

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## Chapter 10

"Ares, what do you think you're doing?"

"Dammit Loki, don't do that! How the hell did you get in here anyway? Desi may forget to lock the door, but I sure as hell know I locked it the minute I entered." Ares wasn't impressed that he'd gotten caught sneaking into Desi's room, especially not by her father.

"Dear boy, you may need dedicated followers to use your powers. But I certainly don't."

Ares glared at him, he didn't have time for riddles now. Desi was wet and naked right on the other side of that door and if he wanted to win her back it was now or never. "That makes no sense."

"Of course it does. You need someone to fight in your name for your powers to work. Yet much like your dear sister Aphrodite, I merely need someone doing or causing mischief for the sake of mischief itself and I have power flowing through my veins."

"How is that possible?" His mood wasn't improving and having Loki laugh at him like he was a silly lovesick child didn't help.

"I am not now, nor have I ever been, revered. I needed to find other sources of power to sustain myself."

"This is all very interesting Loki, but I'm sort of on a schedule here. I'm close to finding..." Ares stopped talking.

He still wasn't sure whose side Loki was on and he wasn't about to give his enemy any more ammunition to use against

him. Or the opportunity to remove the evidence he needed to clear himself.

He'd noted the rage of the elements since the day Desi had disappeared from his room in pain.

The elements seemed to be tied to her feelings, thinking back he realized that when she was happy the sky was peaceful, the breeze calm and warm. When in the throes of passion the wind picked up, the seas got choppy, and debris would be found washed up all over the world the next morning. But if the elements were tied to Desi's emotions, then that would mean...

"Ah yes Desdemona," Loki said breaking into his musings. "If I'm not mistaken, my daughter asked you to stay away!"

"She more like ordered it, and I have the slight problem with being ordered around."

Loki grinned. "Then perhaps you shouldn't have taken that acolyte to your bed!"

The snarl that left his lips didn't even come close to the anger he felt over that incident. Loki was baiting him, he could tell, but why?

Ares had made it well known he'd been set up by someone and was looking for the person responsible.

He'd gone to bed alone that night with the hope that Desi would decide to join him, only to wake as her scent entered his room, with a buxom blonde he'd never before seen lying naked in his bed.

Desi had been standing across the room with pain, hurt and betrayal radiating from her body in waves, looking more

luscious and inviting than he'd ever seen her. He'd tried to explain, but she wouldn't let him.

She hadn't even screamed at him, just very quietly ordered him to stay away from her. Then she'd teleported out of his room, leaving him sitting there in shock at her display of personal power. A power only the gods possessed. He didn't go after her, didn't even think about it, until it was too late to follow her.

When he tried to get the wench to tell him who had put her up to it, she'd refused to tell him and started whimpering like a coward. "I didn't take the wench to my bed, and when I find out who planted her there, they will pay dearly for what they've done."

"Who could have anything to gain from..."

A low menacing growl emanated from his throat. "Loki what do you know?" Ares knew in his gut that Loki had a suspicion about who had set him up. "Who did it? Tell me, so I can rip his limbs from his body."

"Dear boy, I merely have a suspicion. I know nothing."

"Loki!" The threat and power in that one word would have cowed almost any other man or god.

"If I learn that you are being truthful, and that the person responsible is who I think it is, I'll tell Desdemona the truth myself."

"She hates being called that."

Loki laughed. "Almost as much as being called your sweet little demi goddess, I imagine. Yet she tolerates the name."

Ares joined in his laughter. "That is so true, but if my suspicions are correct, she's more."

Both men stopped talking as they heard the water stop running. "Son, if you want any chance to win her heart, you need to bring her some proof of your innocence."

"I know that. I just wanted to hold her. I miss the feel of her in my arms more than you can ever imagine. I'll never give her up, Loki, that woman is mine! Tell her that."

"If you think I'm going to be caught in her room without first announcing myself, you are sorely mistaken, Ares. Her power has grown beyond my hopes and expectations, but worse, that girl looks too damn much like her mother for comfort."

Ares nodded in understanding. When one lived as long as they did, you didn't tempt yourself unnecessarily. So in turn if Desi was his one, he wasn't taking any chances with her life. He had ambrosia and nectar ready for her, to guarantee her youth and immortality. "Fine then, tell *him*, whomever he is, that she's taken."

"Done." The moment the bathroom door opened, both men teleported out of the room, neither willing to face the wrath of a woman in pain.

"Hello? Is anybody out there?" Desi stepped out of the bathroom to find her bedroom empty. She may have left Ares, but she kept expecting him to appear, reminding her that she'd given him her word that she'd help him find Gaia, and she never went back on her word. A slight frown creased her features when she got no response. "I know I heard voices!"

Turning back to the bathroom, she sensed a presence behind her. Her eyes closed with hope and regret, her mind

once again at war with her heart. Desi so wished it was Ares coming to explain, but hoped he would stay away and give her some time. Slowly turning around she spotted something lying on her pillow. Walking over, her heartbeat increased when it turned into a single white rose with red borders along the petals and a note.

She picked up the rose with trembling fingers, her emotions in turmoil. It was the most breathtaking thing she'd ever seen. It looked exactly how she described the flowers in her dream wedding bouquet would look. Only one person knew about that dream, and she'd been extremely drunk when she told him. Bringing the rose to her nose, she now knew she could die happy; the scent was as divine as the look was elegant.

Placing the rose back on the pillow she picked up the note. It read: "I was framed, I will get the proof. You belong to me, my sweet little demi goddess. I adore you. Ares."

"Damn you Ares! Dear gods, I want to believe you."

\* \* \* \*



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Ares had listened to her reaction to his little gift. He knew Desi well enough to know he'd get some sort of reaction from her. His heart raced at her final words; he hadn't completely lost her yet.

Nature's Whim  
*by Aline de Chevigny*

Now all he needed was the proof that he'd been set up, and he would get it. One way or another, he would find the proof that he was innocent and win back the woman he loved.

Now that he no longer needed to find Gaia, he could devote all his time and effort on that single task.

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## Chapter 11

Desi wasn't happy being summoned into her father's presence. She had enough to deal with without having him complicate matters. Ares hadn't made an appearance or even tried to contact her in over a week, and to make matters worse, the elemental damage had picked up pace.

Gaia, wherever she was hiding, was completely out of control. Damage to both land and property had escalated. They'd encountered their first tsunami on the night she caught Ares with the blonde woman.

Not to mention the record number of hurricanes that had appeared across the world this past week, she didn't have time to deal with her father. She needed to find Gaia to get her to rebalance the elements before it was too late. "You requested my presence, father?"

"Ah yes, Desdemona please have a seat. I have something important to discuss with you. I'm just waiting for our other guests to arrive."

Hands on her hips, Desi glared at him. "Father, what are you up to?"

"You are aware of Ares' claim that he was set up?"

"Yes father. But in the past week he hasn't even attempted to convince me otherwise." Desi wasn't sure what he was up to, but she had a very sick feeling in the pit of her stomach. "Who exactly are we waiting for father?"

"Me, lover."

"Thor, I told you to never call me that again." Desi turned to glare at her father. *How dare he do this to me!*

"Of course, my apologies, I forgot."

"I'm sure you did Thor. So tell me father, who else are we waiting for?" Ever suspicious of the God of Mischief, her eyes narrowed when he busied himself so he didn't have to answer. "Father?"

"The remaining guests should be here shortly Desdemona. Why don't you and Thor chat while I go see what could be keeping them."

Desi wasn't about to sit around and play games. Things with Ares were already rocky, if he was to learn that she'd "entertained"

Thor at her father's request, he'd go ballistic and never speak to her again.

The last thing she wanted was for Ares to be right about being framed, then to learn she'd cozied up to Thor while he'd been trying to clear his name; especially after his little gift.

"Goddaughter, where are you going?"

"Uncle Odin?" Desi was stunned; this was turning into a spontaneous Nordic family reunion. Now she knew her father was up to something, and knowing him, that something was no good.

"Hello child, now tell me why you're looking at me so suspiciously?"

"Why are you here?"

"Loki asked me to come by. He said he had an announcement to make. You know when Loki makes an announcement it's best to be there firsthand to hear it. You

never know what could happen if you aren't there to stop him."

Desi could hear the alarm bells going off in her head. If her father had called in Odin, this was bigger than she thought.

"Announcement? What announcement? Father?"

"Soon, Desdemona, soon. We have one more guest we're waiting for to arrive first."

A cold breeze washed over her. "Who?"

"Enough Desdemona, the last guest will be here soon enough, and I expect you to stay until my announcement is made."

"Fine! I'll be out on the balcony. Call me when this mystery guest arrives."

\* \* \* \*



\* \* \* \*

Ares was tempted to ignore Loki's summons, just on the grounds that it was a summons and not a request. Then Loki informed him that Desi would be there and he had the information that Ares had been searching for. That put things in an entirely different light. "Information I've been searching for and Desi all on the same night. Loki you'd better not be playing one of your games."

Ares paced through his tent, his fingers flexing in anticipation of his long overdue reunion with his Desi. He hadn't wanted to leave her, but he needed to check on his

troops. He'd left them alone too long. Matius was trustworthy, but all warriors were tempted to usurp control when left alone for extended periods of time.

So here he was back in the fold of his army, checking on their readiness for the upcoming battle. A battle he realized Desi would not approve of or sanction, especially now that she'd inherited Mother Nature's powers; a battle that would cause her much pain, and perhaps tear her from his side for good. He didn't have concrete proof that she was the new Mother Nature ... yet, but he wasn't blind to the fury and devastation of the elements since that night.

So it seemed he had a choice to make, Desi whom he adored and if he was honest actually loved, not something that came easily to a god. To love someone and have that love returned was rare, some say impossible. Or he could continue with his plans to take control and become the supreme god, yet rule the earth alone. "Damn woman!"

"My god, Ares?"

"It's nothing Matius. How are the men shaping up?"

Matius hesitated for a split second. "They're bored Sire, they need something productive to do."

*Now that was an understatement if ever I heard one.* Ares snorted. "Matius those men are beyond bored. Unfortunately I haven't received any resistance to my goal."

"Then..."

Ares scowled at his commander. "Well it's time they have something productive to do. Wouldn't you agree?"

"Yes, my god Ares. I always agree with all you say!"

"Good. Then I think it's time the men started helping the people these disasters have affected."

"Helping?"

Ares stopped pacing and turned towards his commander. "I can't rule if I have nothing and no one to rule over."

"Very good my god. Brilliant reasoning."

Ares wasn't a fool; he knew that the confused frown Matius wore, held a trace of defiance. "Part of an army's duty Matius is to keep order. As the head of the army, it is my duty to know when to fight, push forward and when to hold back, lend aid; create good will towards our cause."

It was like a door had been opened, Matius nodded his understanding. The defiance ebbed as Ares' words sank in. He knew Matius preferred to defend the helpless over fighting against them. It had been the one chink in the man's armor that Ares had tried unsuccessfully to remove. It also seemed that it would be the one thing that won Ares the time he needed to choose.

Did he help his sweet little demi goddess get her powers under control, or did he ignore love and raise his powers beyond anything he'd ever dreamed or experienced? "I need to go check on a few things Matius. I'm leaving you in charge of sending out the men to give aid where needed."

"My god Ares, are you certain that I..."

Ares laughed. "Very Matius, you have a good heart. Why not use it instead of suppressing it? My sweet Desi is always telling me to do the same thing and she's never wrong when it comes to things like that."

"May the men start with the poor, my liege?"

Nature's Whim  
by Aline de Chevigny

The hopeful tone in Matius' voice, at any other time would have earned him scorn for the show of weakness. "I think that is a fabulous idea. The poor will be infinitely more grateful for the aid than the rich."

"Of course that is what I meant."

Ares slapped him on the shoulder in camaraderie. "No it wasn't Matius, but you can't expect the God of War to have a complete change of heart, can you?" Ares turned to leave. *At least this soon!*

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## Chapter 12

Desi leaned up against the balcony with feelings of anger and betrayal warring for supremacy in her chest. How could her father do that to her? Hadn't she been through enough pain for one lifetime? Misery was slowly eating away at her will to go on, but even she wasn't foolish enough to turn her attention inward in this place. A practice that kept her safe in the past and helped her sense the presence behind her before she saw him, now.

"Hello Desi."

That voice could stop an army in its tracks; but not her. To hear that voice made her heart race, her breath hitch in her throat and her desire skyrocket. No matter what had happened between them, she still desired him. "Ares, does father know you're here?"

"He invited me, my sweet. Are you okay with my being here, love?"

Ares was standing right behind her. She could feel him there, standing as close as possible without actually touching her. His breath hot against her neck waiting for her answer. "Ares I..."

His hands landed on the rail on either side of her cutting off her words. His heady scent invaded her personal space until she could think of nothing but him.

"Yes love, you what?"

He leaned in closer, pressing his body lightly to hers. Desi couldn't control herself, she turned with a speed neither knew

she possessed and pressed herself up against his chest. Her arms sliding up around his neck. Her lips fusing to his in desperation. Ares' arms wrapped around her waist holding her close, deepening the kiss further.

"Ahem! I hope I'm not interrupting anything children."

Desi jumped back putting as much distance between herself and Ares as she could with the rail right behind her.

*What was I thinking?*

"Hello Loki, thank you for inviting me. Now would you care to tell me why I'm here?"

"Soon. Desdemona?"

"We ... we ... we were just saying hello." Desi wanted to kick herself for the lame explanation. *Nice why not go all out Desi and tell him you just wanted to make certain he still had his tonsils?*

Amusement tinged his voice. "I see. Well since all the guests have arrived, it's time for my announcement."

"We'll be right in Loki. I just need a minute alone with Desi first."

"Well be quick about it, Thor is wearing a hole in my favorite carpet with his pacing," Loki informed them with a wink.

Desi had already tuned her father out. She wanted to know what Ares had to say.

"Desi, before..."

"Yes?" Desi closed the distance between them. *I love you Ares, you're the one I want. Don't get me wrong if I ever catch you in another woman's bed or her in yours, I'll blast your ass to the Netherlands and you'll never see me again.*



That was what she wanted to say to him, she just couldn't get her mouth to form the words. Ares understood without her needing to tell him.

"I know, my sweet." He cupped her cheek tenderly. "You are my dream, my goddess, my love, and my sanity. I'll never stop searching for the proof I need and I promise to help you control your new powers, regardless of my previous wishes."

Desi was confused; she had no idea what he was talking about. "Ares, I think you've been going without sleep for too long."

Ares chuckled softly. "True my sweet, but that fact doesn't change a single word I've said."

Desi turned to go. "Let's go inside. I'm curious to see what father is up to."

"You and me both, but Desi, I need to know. Can you find it in yourself to ever forgive me?"

Her feet refused to move, that had been the very last thing she'd ever expected to hear. "I want to say yes. Gods Ares, I want to say yes, but..."

"I know love, that's all I needed to hear. Shall we go inside?"

Desi felt like someone had torn out her heart and was presenting it to her on a platter. If he was telling the truth, she had a lot to make up for. She smiled and placed her hand on the arm Ares presented her. "Let's go see what kind of mischief your father is up to, shall we?"

"Yes, let's."

As they stepped through the doors Ares leaned down to whisper in her ear. "You do realize he approves of me!"

She knew he'd timed the comment down to the second and wanted to kiss him for it. All the tension drained out of her with the laughter he initiated.

"Desdemona, wouldn't you prefer to sit here by me?"

Desi looked at Ares. He stood tall, his jaw clenched and his free hand fisted in anger. But he didn't say a word. "No thank you Thor. I'm quite content to stay here."

"But there's only one seat there!"

"Desi can have the chair, I'll stand!"

Desi may not have been able to completely forgive him yet, but she wasn't about to cause him unnecessary pain either. Not after his heartfelt apology. "You don't need to stand Ares, if you don't mind I could use your lap as a seat."

The grin that spread across his face couldn't be measured. "You never have to ask my sweet, you're always welcome to share my seat."

Thor looked over at them with murder in his eyes, if Odin hadn't been present to put a restraining hand on his arm he may have gone after Ares then and there. Desi didn't understand his actions one bit of late.

"Desdemona really, the man cheated on you. With a blonde..."

"How do you know that Thor? No one knew what the girl looked like but myself and Ares!" Desi sat up straight her suspicions aroused realizing that Thor may have been the one to set Ares up.

"Well it seems that my announcement won't be much of a surprise after all."

"You've found my proof, haven't you Loki?"

Desi watched Thor blanch, her temper rising by the second. "Father?"

"Yes Ares. Desdemona, child, Ares was set up. Framed if you will."

Volcanoes around the world started to smoke.

"Odin as the head of the Nordic Gods, I asked you here to rule on Thor's guilt. He attempted to manipulate my daughter and interfered with the other gods!"

"Loki, how dare you do this to me!"

The volcanoes erupted across the land, lava and rocks being spurted from their tops as Desi's temper flared and broke. "Thor, you poor excuse for a god. When I get my hands on you you'll wish you'd never met me."

If Ares hadn't been holding her down on his lap she would have flown across the room to strangle Thor with her bare hands.

"Ares perhaps you should take Desdemona home while I deal with Thor?"

"Good idea, Odin. I can think of a few ways her excess energy could be put to more productive uses. Loki, a pleasure as always."

"Let. Me. Go. I want to kill him..." A musty scent and insistent lips distracted her enough for Ares to teleport them both to her home.

"Have you calmed enough for me to let you go now?"

"Only if you keep doing that!"

His laugh made her feel guilty all over again. "Ares, I'm so sorry, I..."

"Shhh don't, you had every right to doubt me. My reputation isn't exactly one that inspires trust where relationships are concerned."

Desi leaned into the soft strokes his fingers made through her hair. "Still you tried to tell me, and I refused to listen."

Ares chuckled at her and scooped her up into his lap. "For a woman who didn't want to listen, you gave me one hell of a hello tonight."

"How would you feel about escalating that hello to actual make up sex?" Desi had gotten slowly off his lap as she asked the question. His belt, which she'd undone, still gripped tightly in her hand, coming away with her.

Ares growled and lunged at her, knocking her down onto the bed.

"I'll take that as a yes?" Desi cried laughing as he kissed her neck, tugging at her clothing to get them off her. She sighed completely content with her life at the moment. "I love you Ares."

"It's about time you noticed. Now take off those pants this instant. I've waited long enough to get you back into my bed. I don't plan on wasting another second."

"Ares..."

"Screw this." Desi gasped when he grabbed a fistful of her clothing while bellowing "Off!" expending power recklessly just to speed up the process. His mouth latching onto her nipple, licking and sucking on it until she was ready to scream with pleasure. "I have missed you my sweet, more than I

thought possible. I don't understand how humans do this. It's torture worse than anything I could imagine."

Desi knew she deserved every second of the torture he had planned for her, but tonight she wanted him to make love to her. "Ares..."

"Yes my sweet?"

"Shut up!" She loved the look he got on his face when someone gave him an order. "Now, how did you do that again?" The grin that spread across her face pulled an answering one from Ares. "Oh yes, the word was 'Off!' I believe."

"Minx, one day you'll tell me how you can do things like that without batting an eye."

Desi lay back on the bed with a sad sigh. "Return." A snap of her fingers brought back both her clothing and Ares'.

"Desi? What's wrong love?"

"You're just like him aren't you? All you want is my power and what I can do with it, for you!"

"Desi, no..."

Thunder shattered the bedroom windows at his denial. "Fine you win, my power is yours. Now please leave!"

Ares found himself standing outside her home, rain pounding mercilessly down on his head, stunned that she'd penetrated his shields and exiled him from her presence. The minx had been holding out on him, her control was far too good...

"Or her pain is just that strong, son!"

"Dammit Loki, stop eavesdropping!" Ares growled when Loki laughed. Desi's father or not, Ares was ready to kill

someone and he was the closest target. "What do you want Loki?"

"I heard my daughter crying and came to comfort her then saw you out here. So explain to me how you ended up in the rain ... alone. Things looked so promising before you left?"

Looking around at the destruction going on around him Ares cursed. "That isn't important now, what is important is getting Desi to reign in her power or she'll tear the earth apart!"

"I had my doubts, but it's true isn't it? My daughter is the new Freya? Desdemona is now Mother Nature? That's why Thor has been so adamant to win her back at any cost."

A soft growl escaped Ares throat at the thought of any other man touching his Desi. "I wouldn't put it past that snake to have dispatched Gaia himself. Once I straighten out this misunderstanding, that woman is wearing my token whether she likes it or not!"

Loki's laughter only served to further aggravate his temper. He wasn't foolish enough to believe the misunderstanding would be simple to resolve. He should have known her ego was already battered and bruised, but Desi needed his help, and anything that put his woman in danger took precedence over his pride. If she didn't reign in her powers not only would the earth be torn apart, so would she. Then he'd kill Thor!

"Son, if you can get Desdemona to willingly wear your token, I'll host the wedding reception myself. But Thor is persistent, he won't give up easily."

Ares grinned as Desi's last words came back to him. "Just tell Thor that Desi's power already belongs to me! That should give him pause long enough to make my sweet little demi goddess see reason."

"Or enrage him into going to war with you."

The sky lit up, the earth trembled below his feet and the surf drowned everything in its path. Desi was losing control again. "If Thor wants war, I'll give him a war. My followers far outnumber his by the thousands, if not millions and with Desi on my side, he doesn't stand a chance."

"Might I remind you that my daughter is currently trying very valiantly to kill you! You don't have her on your side."

Ares laughed. "The goddess in her may hate me Loki, but the woman in her loves me beyond logical reason. She'd never be able to live with herself if she stood back and allowed Thor the chance to harm me. Not that he has the power to kill me, but Desi isn't aware of that fact."

"I think you underestimate my daughter Ares. The girl may be her mother's daughter, but never forget she is mine also. If she feels you betrayed her, she'd cut your heart out in an instant."

Dodging a thunderbolt, Ares seriously considered Loki's words. The storm seemed more controlled this time. Less environmental damage, almost like it was focused on him and him alone ... "Well then, I'd better go and make certain that my sweet little love knows how I feel about her, and the best way to do that is to show her that I have nothing but her best interests at heart."

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Loki nodded in agreement then vanished. Ares shook off the latest thunderbolt strike he'd been too distracted to avoid and grinned up at the house. "Good aim lover." He heard Desi's soft feminine laughter echoing down to where he stood and let his grin grow wider. *The damn woman's turned me soft.*

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## Chapter 13

Desi stood on her balcony letting her fury have free reign. After everything they'd been through she went and let him fool her into believing he loved her. She reached deep into the earth under Ares' feet for the invisible energy filaments she could finally see and tugged. A feeling of satisfaction flooded her when she watched him teleport away. The fury she felt couldn't be sustained once the object of her hurt and anger was gone, so it sputtered away.

A deep rich chuckle rang out behind her. "My sweet, you've just proven you can control your powers when angered. How well can you control them when aroused and in the throes of passion?"

"Ares? How ... Why ... Get out!" The way he leaned back against the doorframe told her he wasn't going anywhere. "Fine then if you won't leave ... I will."

Wrapping her power around herself, Desi attempted to teleport away from him. She screamed in frustration when his arms wrapped around her and felt his power dampening down her own.

"Let me go!"

"And lose the love of my life? Not likely. Your power is growing and you need to be able to control it. You, my sweet, not me! I don't want your power. I do, however, want your body, sweaty and naked in my arms."

He stopped talking to look her over, causing her stomach to knot up inside.

"I want to show you something. Will you come with me?"

Desi narrowed her eyes at him. "Why should I trust you?"

Ares smiled and took a single step away from her, cupping her cheek with the palm of his hand and whispered, "Because you know I would never hurt you. Because you love me."

Her heart started beating a mile a minute, this man ... correction this god knew exactly how to push her buttons. "Take this shield off me and I might consider it."

"Very well."

With a quick motion he removed the shield blocking her ability to teleport. The fact that he didn't even hesitate to free her caused her to pause and seriously consider his request.

"Where do I have to go?"

"To my camp. I need to check on my army and make certain that the men are following my orders."

A frown curved her lips in disgust. "Forget it!" She took an involuntary step back when she saw the look of anger etched on his face.

"The men, Desi, are working towards cleaning up the damage created by your unchecked power. Rebuilding the homes and cities that were destroyed when the earth and elements were left without guidance."

Guilt assailed her, leaving her feeling confused. "I didn't know..."

Ares always knew how to make her feel better; he pulled her into his arms, pushing away the confusion and guilt leaving only soothing comfort in its wake.

"No one knew, love, we all just thought Gaia was in hiding. Acting out in jealousy over..."

Desi wasn't stupid; she knew Gaia was in love with Ares, all the gods knew. He didn't need to protect her from that information, but he always tried.

"You aren't responsible for the past Desi, but you are responsible from this point on. You have to learn to control your powers."

"I don't think I can do it alone Ares. I've never had powers this potent before. What if I can't control them?"

"I know you can!"

Desi was skeptical; how could he know when she was unsure? "How?"

"You found a way to make me fall in love with you. Reminded me that I had a heart. That took more power than anything else you'll ever have to face."

Desi laughed and cuddled further into his arms. Her mood swings were getting worse and she knew she had to get them under control soon if she were to master her new powers. "I'm sorry Ares. I don't know what came over me back there ... I didn't hurt you did I?"

Ares chuckled and held her closer. He always made her feel so safe and loved. *Dammit, what's wrong with me?*

"My pride was perhaps a little bruised. But it would take much more than a little thunder bolt to hurt me, sweetheart."

Desi closed her eyes and quietly thanked whoever was watching over her for sparing her the pain of losing the man she loved.

"Enough talk Desi, it's time for action. Will you come with me?"

Placing one hand on either side of his face, she pulled him down for a heated kiss. Wrapping her newfound powers firmly around them both, she teleported them straight into his camp bed. "Could your men wait a few more hours, Ares? I thought we could explore my control during those throes of passion you mentioned earlier?"

"I've waited two months to get you back into my bed, lover. A few more hours won't make that big a difference to the men. It will seem like an eternity to me."

Desi giggled at the breathlessly impatient response he gave her. Could Ares have really gone without a woman in his bed for the past two months? He'd been struggling with her pants for the past five minutes, which wasn't like him. The normally stoic war god seemed almost panicked in his impatience to get her naked. With a wicked grin at his curses, Desi waved her hand across his chest and watched in delight as his clothing disappeared. Maybe she would get a handle on this new magic of hers after all.

"Dammit woman, we had a talk about your wearing pants."

Running her fingers down his bare chest Desi grinned. "Oh I don't know Ares, they don't seem to be giving me any trouble at all. In fact yours are already gone."

The string of curses from his lips had to have alerted the entire camp to their presence. It amazed her that one of his generals didn't come tearing through the tent's entrance to find out what was going on.

"Now you're in for it, lover, there will be no mercy from me tonight."

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Desi laughed, then squealed when he used his power to remove her clothing and used it to pin her in place. One last thought went through her head before the pleasure he caused her took over, *who knew Ares liked bondage...*

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## Chapter 14

Ares chuckled while getting out of bed. Desi tried everything in her power short of tying him to the bed, to stop him from getting up tonight. Opening the tent flaps, his respect and admiration for Desi rose another notch. The shimmering walls of his wards were still intact a hand's distance away. He lowered the protections and bellowed for his newly appointed general. "Matius!" Turning back he found Desi sprawled across his bed invitingly. His eyebrows rose in an unvoiced question. *What was his woman up to?*

"This bed of yours, Ares, is quite comfortable. The camp followers must truly have appreciated the kind gesture."

Ares growled in disapproval, and teleported onto the bed, pinning Desi in place below him, barely registering that she'd gotten dressed. "No woman has come anywhere near this bed. No woman, my sweet little demi goddess, but you!"

"My liege you call ... my apologies Lord Ares."

Ares looked up to find Matius staring down at his boots in embarrassment. "Yes Matius I did. My Queen..."

"Ares, you oaf, where are your manners. Get up when you speak to the man. You called for him, the least you can do is show the man some respect." She scowled, pushed him aside and got up off the bed to greet Matius with a smile.

Seeing the look of awed surprise on his general's face pulled a deep chuckle from Ares' throat. "Matius meet Desdemona, my Queen!"

Matius dropped immediately to one knee before her, pulling a frown from Desi's lips which completely entertained Ares.

"Get off the ground Matius, I've done nothing to earn that type of loyalty. From what Ares has told me, I should be thanking you."

"No, my lady, as my god's consort..."

Desi waved him silent, a completely goddess like thing to do in his book, then glared right at him, entertaining Ares even further.

"Ares may have called me his queen, but he has yet to ask me for my consent on the issue. The man seriously needs to learn some manners."

Ares burst out laughing at her reprimand; no other person or god could get away with speaking to him that way.

"But ... my lady ... he's our god! And he's chosen you to be his Queen! You can't seriously be saying you would turn him down?"

"That's what I keep telling her!"

Desi snorted at them both. "Until he asks and stops telling, I am not his anything. Now get up this instant!"

Ares grin grew wider, he'd forgotten how people instinctively obeyed Desi when she got that demanding tone in her voice and that was without using her power to enforce her will. When she added her power behind it, even he couldn't disobey.

"I thank you Matius, and all the men under your command for working so diligently to fix all the damage I inadvertently caused."

The moment Desi took Matius' hand between her own, Ares was off the bed like a lightning bolt to slip his arms around her waist possessively. "The damage wasn't done deliberately, my sweet. None of the gods were aware that Gaia had disappeared and passed her powers onto another." Looking over at Matius, Ares contemplated how much he could trust the man to keep his Desi safe. "Matius that information must be kept to yourself. Desdemona's life may depend on it."

"Of course, my liege."

"Good, now, how are the men? Any complaints about their current orders?" Matius hesitated before answering raising Ares suspicions. "Matius?"

"There's been talk, my lord. The men wonder if you've gone soft."

"Along with one or two attempts to take over my army, I'd wager."

Desi had stopped paying attention the moment he started talking about rebellions to cuddle against his chest. It amused him how she suddenly had this need to touch and be held. He couldn't wait until this meeting with Matius was over, so he could make love to her again.

"Aye my lord, there was."

Ares nodded, he'd expected that, just as he'd expected Matius to keep the reins of power while he was gone. "You did well Matius. I'll deal with the rebels tomorrow. My orders stand, unless you've finished helping the villagers rebuild?"

"No my lord, the damage was extensive in this village. We have another three or four days of work to be done here."



Desi's soft sob tugged at his heart. "Very well, then keep to it. Short of an emergency, I am not to be disturbed tonight Matius."

"As you wish my lord." Matius kneeled before him, his eyes on Desi with a look of respect-tinged admiration. "My lady, no god would cry over destruction. They would revel in it or gloat. You, my goddess, are different and for that I pledge fealty to you. I pledge my sword to protect my god's Queen."

Desi sobbed louder and threw her arms around Matius' neck. "I don't know what to say Matius, except thank you."

Seeing Desi with her arms around another man made him see green with jealousy, no matter how innocent the act. "That's enough, love, Matius needs to return to the men and you need to practice your control."

Desi stood with a soft laugh, wiping away the tears from her eyes and returned to his arms. The relief he felt that she'd chosen to love him was balanced by the annoyance he felt that a woman, any woman had such a hold over him. "You're excused Matius."

"My liege, my lady."

Ares watched Matius leave before re-erecting his barriers, leaving them keyed to Matius in case of emergency. "Let's get you back to bed and test that control of yours a little more shall we?"

"You're just too good to me Ares."

He knew she was teasing by the way her eyes sparkled at him and the fact that she was removing his shirt before he could finish his sentence. "I want to keep my queen happy, how else will I convince her to wear my token?"

Her silvery toned laughter wrapped itself around him, the sound made him feel better than ambrosia.

"Oh, I can think of a way."

"Name it, my sweet."

"I'll wear your token, if you wear mine."

Shock swept through him, no woman had ever asked him to bear her token before. He wasn't sure exactly how to respond. Then again he'd never asked a woman that wasn't an acolyte of his temple to wear the mark.

"You had better agree to the terms, son, pregnant women aren't known for their patience and understanding when being rejected."

Ares spun towards the sound of his father's voice, too stunned by his revelation to be angry at his appearance.

"What did you say?"

Zeus stepped further into the room with an arrogant grin. "I said that your lady is with child."

For the first time in his entire immortal life Ares felt fear. If Desi were with child then she'd be in danger. Danger of dying in childbirth, or dying at the hands of his enemies when they learned of her. If he lost her there'd be nothing to stop him from the dark path of destruction he had always preferred in the past. Desi was his anchor, he couldn't lose her. "You're insane old man, how could you know if Desi were..."

"Ares..."

"Yes my sweet one?"

"Let's just forget that I mentioned you wearing my token."

He sensed her drawing her power around herself to teleport away and tightened his hold around her. "Don't even

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think it!" Taking her hand, he placed it over his heart. "Place your token, my love."

Her hand shook against his chest, and her eyes brimmed with tears, but his little demi goddess wore the biggest, brightest, most beautiful smile on her lips he'd ever seen.

"This might hurt, I've never done this before."

"If you want, I could guide you through it, my love."

Desi flashed him a grin. "So ... what should my token look like? Words, perhaps? Desi's do not touch! Danger, booby-trapped! Hands off!..."

Ares laughed and kissed her stopping her run of bad cliché's. "How about Nature's Whim? One lone tree with a thunder bolt striking it."

Desi frowned at him. "I prefer Nature's man. That way they all know who you belong to!"

Ares looked over at Zeus when his father started laughing. "War's woman and Nature's man. It's like a bad fairy tale."

"You would know, father, you've had how many written about you?"

Desi's frown deepened as she turned towards Zeus. "Zeus if you wouldn't mind, I'd like to be alone with my man. We have ... unfinished business to take care of."

"Desi, does my father know something I should?" Her soft laugh made him instantly suspicious. "Desi?"

"Oh fine, he may be right, I'm not exactly sure. Well really Ares, it's been a crazy couple of months. With the searching for the girl and the Thor thing and...."

"Desi!"

Desi crinkled her nose at him. "I don't remember the last time I had my monthly visit. But Zeus' theory does explain a few things."

"You do realize that when the other gods learn of our union and realize who you are, there will be some worry. Not to mention a few assassination attempts."

The raw anger he saw in her features startled him. He'd never seen Desi look so fierce and primal before. He liked it.

"If they even think about harming what's mine, they'll find themselves trapped within the earth for eternity."

*Well that answers that, Desi is definitely with child. Only motherhood could turn my sweet, soft Desi so deadly.* He sat quietly on their bed and studied her. She was tall, strong, independent and beautiful. He loved her strength and determination as much as her body, and he wasn't foolish enough to ignore the fact that without her he'd likely be dead. This child of theirs would be powerful indeed.

When a frown curved her lips, he beamed a roguish grin and held out his hand to her in invitation to join him on their bed. "Once the child is born you will wear my token. Until then love ... brand me as yours!"

The End

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### **A little bit about the author:**

When I was born, my parents christened me Aline de Chevigny. Maybe they knew then, what I'm just now figuring out. I was born to be a romance author!

I am Canadian and a Chemical Engineering Technologist who decided one day to try the impossible. Or so I thought, LOL, the year I turned 30, I moved far away from all my family and friends to start a new job.

I was so bored and lonely that I picked up my pen and started writing the stories floating around in my head down on paper. I never dreamed they'd be published, but to my surprise and delight my publisher liked it. My family has been extremely supportive of my goal and they continue encouraging me to sub my works.

Since that day I've written and sold 18 books, from Novella to Novel length and in various romance genres. This being my latest Paranormal Contemporary Romance...

You can find blurbs and excerpts of my all my stories at [www.alinedechevigny.com](http://www.alinedechevigny.com) along with some free reads, contests and in progress works.

Thank you for being a fan and supporting me in my goal to entertain the world the only way I know how.

Yours truly, Aline de Chevigny

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