



Loose Id

# Wet

LIZZIE LYNN LEE

*Dangerous Curves:*  
*Wet*

*Lizzie Lynn Lee*



[www.loose-id.com](http://www.loose-id.com)

## **Dangerous Curves: Wet**

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## Prologue

Arrain de Iassain, the king of the nymphs, sat at the edge of a circular pool, staring at the surface of the water. With *mirrormar*, Arrain could astral-gaze to any watery part of the human world. He disliked beaches and swimming pools. Watching from below as humans pedaled in the water wasn't always a pretty sight. His favorites were wishing wells. Like this one, which appeared to be at the heart of a busy human city.

Mirrormar reflected a scene of a young man and his mate. They linked hands with joy as, together, they tossed a coin into the well. As it sank to the bottom, the young man seized his woman in a tight embrace and gave her an amorous kiss. They laughed afterward; the flickers of hope in their eyes burned like eternal flame.

Arrain gripped the stone ledge of the pool.

Hope.

The only thing he and his kingdom, Myria, didn't have. He lamented what a pity it was that the longevity and power he possessed didn't ensure true happiness. Today was the fiftieth anniversary of the death of his beloved wife, Callista. A month prior, he'd lost his infant son, Gavin. His family geis had come to roost. Decades had passed since their deaths, but he still grieved.

Exhaling a deep breath, Arrain waved his hand, sending ripples of water across the mirrormar. The scene changed. Another wishing well came into view. Autumn had come in that part of the world, judging from the rust-colored trees beyond. The humans milled around with their happy faces, chattering excitedly before tossing their coins into the water. A father with his two boys. A group of

young girls. An elderly woman bundled in warm clothes. Arrain could see one thing in common about them. They all harbored hope.

Arrain paused and cast a spell, making the old woman's reflection fill the entire mirrormar's surface. *What did she wish when she tossed her coin into the wishing well?* Long life? Good health? Or did she wish her children would live in everlasting happiness?

A shard of envy lanced his heart. Arrain dipped his hand into the mirrormar; the old woman's image blurred and faded with the ripples of the water. When he died, his family legacy would end with him. Myria would be without a ruler and protections. Chaos would ensue.

He needed a queen. He needed an heir.

But he dreaded that the geis might claim them too.

"Highness?"

A soft voice startled his reverie. Arrain straightened his posture and threw a glance over his shoulder. One of his maids, Isena, had brought him food. He motioned for her to leave the tray nearby. He had no appetite. After a few minutes, he found the maid was still rooted in her place. "What do you want?" he asked.

"Pardon me, Your Highness. Elder Seraph has requested your audience."

"I'll see him tomorrow."

"But, Highness..." Isena lifted her gaze and looked upon him timidly. "Elder Seraph has a Weaver with him."

Arrain stiffened. For weeks, Seraph had hounded him relentlessly to see a Weaver. The elder had expressed his concerns over Arrain's long-overdue seclusion. Seraph believed since a Dark Weaver had invoked the geis on Arrain's father, perhaps another Weaver could find the solution to the problem. Arrain still wasn't convinced this was a good idea. He just didn't want to harm another soul.

He pondered for another minute. Maybe seeking advice from a Weaver wouldn't hurt. He had nothing to lose, after all. Besides, Seraph was such an adamant ass, it was hard to get rid of him if he had his mind set on something.

Arrain made a vague motion with his hand. "Very well. Send them in."

Isena curtsied and withdrew silently. Arrain eyed her with disinterest. Each year, many nymphs championed their daughters to the palace overseer to be picked as the king's maids. Isena had been handpicked for her beauty, her speech, and her disposition. Like others, Isena was slender, a fragile beauty. Arrain frowned. Perhaps it was one of the problems. Fragile beauty wouldn't be able to give him a healthy heir. Let alone withstand the geis.

He preferred his woman lush. With ample flesh. Maybe a bit exotic too.

Easy now, he chastised himself. Wishful thinking leads to nothing but disappointment. With a heavy heart, Arrain rose from his seat to greet his guests.

## Chapter One

Mara Jones had been staring at her computer screen for the past five minutes in disbelief, trying to decide whether what she saw was pure luck or if someone had just pulled a scam on her. But there it was—Dangerous Curves, the fabled site she had heard so much about—right before her eyes.

The company that ran the site boasted a sole mission: they guaranteed to match big, beautiful women with extremely hot hunks, but only if they were deemed worthy of getting laid. Because of that, the site wasn't accessible to just anybody. Rumor had it if you sent a blank e-mail addressed to Dangerous Curves, Dangerous Curves, Dangerous Curves—yep, you had to type it three times and without any extension—the site would reveal itself to you.

Mara had thought Dangerous Curves was nothing but an urban legend. The Internet was notoriously filled with weird stuff nowadays. But when the girls at the office had talked about Dangerous Curves, Mara became intrigued.

It wasn't like she was specifically shopping for a man. After her episode with her ex-fiancé, Ben, years ago, her love life had been nearly nonexistent. Her relationships always fizzled out before they went somewhere, and she had become tired of "it's not you, it's me" routine. And for the past couple of years, she had abandoned the dating circuit and indulged in sweets and chocolate. Still, it would be nice to find that special someone. Someone to talk to. Someone to share her bed.

Mara's friend, Candace, who worked in the archives department, had been obsessed with Dangerous Curves's site for the past couple of weeks. Whenever Mara dropped paperwork off for Candace to file, she saw the girl fussing with her in-box, trying to send a blank e-mail to the phantom Web site.



Without a proper extension, the Whiting Library e-mail server wouldn't allow her to send the message, and in commercial networks, the e-mails always bounced back. When Mara had stolen a glance at Candace's computer screen earlier, she had seen Candace's in-box filled with notifications of undeliverable e-mails.

So, a few minutes earlier, when Mara had wrapped her work up for the night and was ready to go home, a sudden curiosity had compelled her to send a blank e-mail to Dangerous Curves. Seconds after she hit Send, her computer screen blanked and the Web site popped up before her eyes. She wanted to pinch herself, unable to believe it had actually worked. She would have screamed loudly and called Candace to her desk, but her friend had already gone home.

As a fabled site, Dangerous Curves lived up to her expectations. It looked flashy, designed in an elegant red-and-gold color scheme, complete with a streaming ad featuring their success stories. Dozens of photos of happy couples danced across the screen, and the testimonies about how Dangerous Curves had changed their lives plastered the home page. The one thing she noticed the most was that Dangerous Curves wasn't kidding about their mission. The men who were being matched with the ordinary, Rubenesque women were extremely hot. Like five-alarms hot. Watching them made Mara want to fan herself. Where had they found these guys who loved lush women?

She looked to the bottom of the page. It asked if she was ready to embark on the journey of a lifetime. "Well, yes, sir," Mara exclaimed. "Count me in." She clicked Yes, and it took her to the signing-in page. After a row of text stating their guarantee to find her perfect match, the only things there were fields for her name and birthday. How were they supposed to match you with hot hunks if they only took your name and birthday information? Then she felt she had nothing to lose. She went forward with it. Mara typed in her information and hit Send. A pop-up window thanked her for her interest.

That was it? Nothing else? What a rip-off. She started having second thoughts about Dangerous Curves. If something sounded too good to be true, it probably was.

Irritation crept at the base of her skull. Sighing heavily, she turned off her computer and headed home.

Later on, as she unwound in a hot bubble bath, she heard her land phone rang. She didn't feel like getting out of the bathtub, so she let the answering machine roll in. Somebody left a message for her. A silky, husky woman's voice came from her bedroom.

"Ms. Jones. I'm calling you on behalf of Dangerous Curves. We'd like to inform you that we have found your match. Congratulations."

*What?* Mara bolted straight up in her bathtub. Dangerous Curves. How did they know her phone number? A cold shiver ran through her spine. Mara got up from the bathtub, wanting to check the message again. Before she could think of anything else, the glass shower door she was holding on to disappeared. She slipped and tumbled back into the tub.

*What the...*

Mara screamed as she tried to hold on to something. Her bathtub expanded, becoming bigger and deeper than a swimming pool. Her feet couldn't reach the bottom. She panicked, pedaling to keep herself afloat. The water around her whirled, and a powerful current seized her and pulled her down to the drain. Water filled her mouth as she struggled to swim to the surface. She gasped and spluttered, flailing her arms to grab something, but she couldn't fight the thick current. Mara was helplessly swept into a whirlpool of water that dragged her into the dark, deep unknown.

\* \* \*

"Greetings, lovely one. What is your name?"

Mara screamed when she realized she was sitting in a man's lap,

"Uh." The man made a face. "I didn't realize the aboveground beauties had such powerful voices." He tried to calm her. "Relax. I won't harm you."

She coughed and spluttered, and at the same time, tried to cover her nakedness as best as she could. *Where am I?* Mara gasped, filling her lungs with much-needed air while throwing a glance at her surroundings. She didn't recognize this place. The last thing she remembered was her bathtub trying to swallow her into the drain. She cut her gaze to the man. *Who the hell is this guy? How did I end up here?* She squirmed, wanting to get off him, but the man wouldn't let her. He wrapped his arms around her waist possessively.

"Who...who are you?" Her voice was shaky. She felt embarrassed beyond anything. She'd never been naked in front of a stranger before, especially one this gorgeous.

"I asked for your name first."

He had a foreign accent. Definitely not an American. Not British either. Mara couldn't put a finger on his nationality. His voice was deep and crisp, laced with dulcet tones so each syllable made the base of her spine tingle.

She cleared her throat. "M-my name's Mara Jones. Wh-where am I?"

"Mara Jones," he echoed, as if her name was a fabulous secret he'd just learned. "Well, Mara, I'm Arrain de Iassain. Welcome to Myria."

"Myr—what?"

"Myria, my kingdom."

Right. His kingdom. Was he European? French? This whole thing didn't make any sense. One second she was minding her own business in her bathtub, and a second later she landed in his lap. Could this be magic? Or had she actually slipped on her bathroom floor and cracked her skull open and all this was nothing but a hallucination? She had heard a brain injury could cause some funky delusions, as if you were on an acid trip.

"Could I please have a towel?"

"Are you cold?"

"I'm naked."

"I like you this way." He ran his hand from her thigh up to the curve of her waist and then on to the swell of her chest.

Mara shivered, mortified beyond anything. She felt self-conscious, as she hadn't been naked in front of a man for a long time. "Please, sir, I'd really appreciate it if you'd give me a towel. Or anything that I can cover myself with."

He tugged her chin up. Their gazes clashed.

Mara trembled. She realized how beautiful his eyes were. They were large, oval-shaped, with shockingly green irises like jewels from the deep ocean. His lashes and eyebrows were black, as lush as the hair that framed his strong jaws. God. Her heart pounded faster. Heat rose to her cheeks. She'd never met a man as striking as him in person.

He inclined his head. "Very well, sweet thing. I'll grant your wish."

He lifted her and carried her to the bed. Mara drew a relieved breath. As soon as he deposited her on the silk-covered mattress, Mara shrank away from him and hastily snatched the bedspread to cover her nakedness. There. Somehow, she felt a hell of a lot better when she didn't have to be in her birthday suit in front of this man.

He watched her with amusement. Mara noticed his towering height as he stood at the foot of the bed. The man must have been at least seven feet tall. She wasn't exactly a pixie, but those toned arms of his were bigger than her calves. He was bare-chested, dressed only in black leather pants and boots, showcasing his glorious muscles, from his biceps and pectorals to his chiseled abs. God, was he luscious. His skin looked like golden caramel tempered with sunshine, smooth and so mouthwatering it made her want to lick it. Her gaze strayed to the impressive bulge at the juncture of his thighs. *Good Lord*. Mara blushed, tearing her gaze from him. The man was aroused. Unconsciously, she inched farther into the middle of the bed when he settled next to her.

"What's wrong?" he asked.

*Duh*. "Everything. Why am I here?"

“You wished for me.”

“What? No, I didn’t. I don’t even know you.”

His eyebrows arched. “Didn’t you wish for a mate?”

“A mate? You mean a date?”

He gave her a look as if to ask, *What’s the difference?*

Suddenly, it dawned on her. Dangerous Curves. The message left on her answering machine. *Oh God*. Everything clicked. She remembered the lady from Dangerous Curves saying they had found her match. Him. This guy. “I didn’t expect you to be my date. How did you get me here? I was taking a bath in my own freaking bathtub.”

“You were?” His smile widened. “That explains the soap on your body.” He leaned forward and sniffed her. Mara inched away. “Simply divine,” he purred.

“P-please, just answer my question. Why did you kidnap me?”

“Kidnap? No, sweet thing. I did no such thing. The Weaver sent you here.”

“Who? I didn’t agree to any of this.”

“Did you not sign a contract?”

“What contract? I only gave my name and my birthday on the Web site and...” Her words trailed off when he gave her a reproachful kind of look. “What?”

“In our world, your given name and birthday are sacred, for those are the marks of your soul. If you give your name carelessly, a Dark Weaver can take you prisoner. Giving away your birthday allows them to enslave you. You ought to be careful with Weavers, sweet thing.”

“You’ve got to be kidding me.”

“I am definitely *not*.”

Okay. She made a mental note to never give away her name and birthday so casually again. There were people who were crazier than ID thieves and hackers. Cyber thieves only stole your money. These weirdos could steal you through the bathtub’s drain. Mara glanced around her. The bedroom was grand and opulent,

definitely catering to a king. All the walls were plastered in rare white stone, and the ceilings were so high, someone could fit a three-story building in there.

The decor was simply magnificent. All the furniture was carved in dark wood and adorned with gold inlay. Every drapery and linen screamed expensive. This place looked like one of those palaces she read about in travel books about Europe. If she wasn't so freaked out from the whole ordeal, she would have loved to stay and chitchat with this charming stranger. But since she was practically naked and this man had caught her in the worst possible state, Mara itched to get back to where she belonged and forget this whole thing had ever happened.

"So, Mister, can you send me back home?"

"Why the hurry?" He flashed another stunning smile. "You wished for me, and here we are. Besides, we haven't yet gotten to know each other intimately."

A shiver coursed down her spine. *How intimately?* Her face flushed hot. She hadn't been intimate with a man in a long time. Years. She had dated a few times, but none of those dates had gone beyond polite conversation in the restaurant or holding hands in the movie theater. A couple of men she'd dated had confided to her friends behind her back that she was too tense and frigid. Frigid, for criminy's sake! After Ben had left her stranded at the altar ten years ago, she had become a bit paranoid about opening her heart to someone new. Nothing could crush a woman's confidence more than having her fiancé bail on her on her wedding day, and all courtesy of a skinny stripper chick who had entertained at his bachelor party. Since then, Mara had been introverted and self-conscious.

Why the hell would this man be interested in her? Genuinely. Not just pretense or being polite, like most of her dates were. Didn't hot guys usually dig hot chicks?

"I"—Mara cleared her throat—"I think this has to be some kind of mistake. I'm sure I'm not your type. I..."

"Mistake? Nay." He shook his head. "You're exactly the one I want. I have paid a fortune to the Weaver to find me an aboveground beauty like you." He leaned

forward until their lips were only a hairbreadth away. “Mara, you are going to be my queen.”

## Chapter Two

“I’m what?”

Even though she looked deeply distressed, her voice still sounded mellifluous. Arrain loved it. He loved everything about her, from her dark liquid eyes, her tiny braided hair, to her silky mocha complexion and her lush, curvy figure. His cock had hardened under his britches the moment she arrived in his lap. The Weaver didn’t disappoint. This beauty was truly exquisite. A real woman, unlike his skinny maids. Now, if he could make her a bit calmer, she would be perfect.

Mara jabbed a finger into his chest. “You paid someone to kidnap a woman? What’s wrong with you?”

Goddess, she was fiery. But Arrain liked her type. Spitfire. “Mara.” He tried to calm her. “I desire a special woman as my queen, and thus I must be willing to pay the price. No facilitator works for free.”

“What facilitator? Is he the one who runs the Dangerous Curves site?”

He looked puzzled.

“Site. Web site.” She shook her hands agitatedly, causing the bedsheet to slip from her breasts, exposing her sumptuous nipples. Mara snatched the sheet and covered her chest again. “It’s a place on the Internet where you can find information or buy and sell stuff or socialize.”

He shook his head.

She groaned in frustration. “It’s hard to explain. I want to talk to this person who you paid money to get me here.”

“May I ask why?”



“So I can kick his ass. Or her ass. I didn’t agree to this.”

“You didn’t desire a mate? A Weaver would never bind you in a contract if you didn’t wish it.”

“Who the hell is this Weaver?”

“We know her as Hei. Although I suspect it isn’t her real name. All weavers are very secretive about their identities.”

“Hei?” Mara frowned. “Is she...someone like you?”

“Someone like me?”

“I bet you aren’t human. Humans can’t kidnap people through the bathroom drain.”

Arrain laughed. “Hei is a witch-sprite who can walk in both worlds, yours and mine. She can look into your heart to see your deepest desire. You do wish for a mate, do you not?”

“Uhm...”

“Mara?” he prodded. “Do you not wish for a mate?”

She didn’t answer him right away. “I did,” she finally admitted. “But not like this.”

“Like this?” Arrain frowned. “Do I repulse you? Are you not pleased with the way I look?”

“What? No, no, that’s not what I mean. You’re very good-looking and all. It’s just I’m not used to mysteriously arriving somewhere and being told I’m someone’s queen. We have a thing called dating.”

“Dating?”

She looked lost for a moment. “Courtship?”

“Ah. We do too. Then we shall. I’m eager to get to know you better.” He reached for her.

“Wait...this is how you court a woman here? In case you haven’t noticed...I’m freaking naked!”

“I don’t see that as a problem.”

“Well, I do.”

She squealed when Arrain attempted to pull the bedsheet from her. “Woman, cease your screaming. I won’t hurt you. I just want to please you.”

“P-please me?”

“I can sense your excitement.”

“I don’t think so, Mister.”

Ah. She liked to play hard to get as well. Arrain crushed his mouth on hers. He kissed her hard, muffling her objection. Mara squirmed at first, but then she surrendered when Arrain deepened his kiss. He pried her mouth open with his tongue. He plundered her, licked the roof of her mouth, her palate, sampling everything she had to offer. Goddess, she tasted so sweet. He felt ravenous. When he finally gave her a chance to breathe, Mara sagged in his arms. She mumbled a string of gibberish he didn’t understand. But judging from the way she reacted, she didn’t mind the kiss. She seemed to enjoy it.

“Well?”

She looked dazed. “Oly sheit.”

He cleared some stray locks from her face, admiring her neatly braided hair. Most nymphs possessed straight and light hair. He was an exception. His dark tresses were prized among his people and considered a rarity. Like this black beauty. Mara would make a fine queen.

He caressed her cheek with the tips of his fingers. He hadn’t been thoroughly convinced that the geis could be annulled. A part of his conscience worried that if he consorted with her, the curse might claim her also. But the Weaver had dispelled his uneasiness. She had told him that was unlikely to happen. She believed the geis could be circumvented because Mara wasn’t a nymph.

Arrain exhaled a deep breath. He really shouldn’t question the Weaver’s wisdom. After all, among all classes of the Unseens, Weavers and magic sprites

were the only beings who could walk between worlds since the Separation. Ones who could forge and banish curses at will. To doubt a Weaver's knowledge seemed unwise.

And besides, he was taken with Mara. It had been so long since he'd had hope. He needed to convince her to stay.

"Aryn," she slurred.

"It's Arrain." He let his tongue roll, emphasizing the *r*. The aboveground folks always talked in funny accents. Just like the Weaver too, since she had spent most of her time among humans.

She tried it again. "Arrayn."

Well, close enough. He loved the way she pronounced his name. Very seductive. He cupped her face, brushing his thumb over her lips. "Are you a virgin?"

She was startled. "No. God forbid, no."

"Good. Then I won't have to be particularly gentle."

"What?" She squealed again when he grabbed her and pushed her down so she was lying on her back. "I...uhm, I don't think this is a good idea."

"Why not?"

"I don't know you, and it's too soon."

"You think so?" He groped her thigh and stroked it gently.

Mara shivered.

He could feel her goose bumps on her naked, fevered skin. "But you desire this. I've never touched a woman intimately if she didn't wish it."

She bit her lip, looking unsure.

"Mara?"

"Yes, but this is too soon."

A strained groan escaped him. Arrain summoned all the strength he could muster. It was very hard to do. He had been celibate for a long time, and there was

only so much a man could take. His cock throbbed hard in his britches, to the point it hurt. "Mara... The Weaver gave me a day and a night to court you. And I intend to make the best of the unfairly short time to claim you as mine."

She looked stunned at what he had said. Her eyes rounded, flashing in disbelief. "I...don't know what to say. I...I'm sorry. I just... I don't know you."

He sighed. She was right. It was too soon for this kind of intimacy. Decades of celibacy must have gone to his head. After all, she had just arrived. Perhaps she was tired. Or hungry. The trip from aboveground must have exhausted her. Arrain caressed her cheek and released her. "Forgive me. I should have let you rest first upon your arrival. Are you hungry?"

"N-no. What time is it here?"

"I suppose it would be equal to midday from where you came."

"Oh."

He took her hand and kissed it. "Why don't you rest for a while and, later, join me for tea? It would be my honor to show you around."

"That sounds good."

"Excellent." Arrain halfheartedly climbed off the bed to let her have her well-deserved rest.

"Arrain."

He paused.

"You said earlier the Weaver gave you a day and a night to court me?"

"That is correct."

"After that, you'll return me to my home?"

"I sincerely hope you'll stay."

Mara cast him an unsure look.

Arrain stroked her hair lovingly. "I understand it must be difficult for you to accept due to the circumstance of how we met. You want a mate and I need a queen.

Have a little faith, sweet thing. The Weaver wouldn't deliver you to me if she thought we weren't good for each other."

Mara couldn't rest, let alone sleep. Her adrenaline level had spiked through the roof and she was too wired to just sit still. She had spent the last few hours roaming around Arrain's bedroom, inspecting every nook and cranny, feeling both curious and full of awe as she explored. A part of her didn't want to believe a person could be spirited away into a magical kingdom, but as time passed, reality sank its claws in, and she had to admit Myria was real. Arrain was real.

The kiss was real.

Mara flopped into a nearby chair and grunted in disbelief, realizing she had shunned the prospect of being laid by an extremely hot hunk. Hadn't her sole purpose of getting a date through Dangerous Curves boiled down to that one crude, primitive need?

Yes, she had wanted that special someone for a long time, and she was freaked when her dream date wasn't human. But so what if Arrain wasn't human? He seemed like a very nice guy. Attentive. And genuinely interested in her. Besides, a hot guy was a hot guy, whether he was human or not.

After her sad episode with Ben, she always got nervous and self-conscious when it came to intimacy. Her therapist had told her she had a body image problem. She feared rejection. She was scared that she would relive the most embarrassing moment in her life again.

She remembered how mortified she'd been when Ben's best man had regretfully told her Ben had gone to Vegas with the chick he'd met the night before. The next day, she'd found out Ben and the stripper whore had had a quick Vegas wedding. Ben himself had called her to give her an apology a week later, saying he was terribly sorry for what he had done, but he couldn't help it. Jessica, the tramp he'd married, was his soul mate.

Soul fucking mate.

Sure, Ben had had his comeuppance when the marriage lasted only three weeks and Jessica walked out with half of his assets. But the scar from his betrayal remained. Now she thought about it, Arrain had looked mighty disappointed when she told him it was too soon. He wouldn't have had that kind of raging hard-on if he didn't really want her, would he? Maybe her fear was baseless. A shiver curled through her like a sly snake. She thought of how close they had been. She'd been under him with their bodies only separated by a thin sheet. Anything could have happened. Anything.

Yep, she was a dumb woman.

Mara slapped a hand to her forehead. Goddamn it. She must stop being Miss Prude if she didn't want to be alone for the rest of her life. And to be honest, she was tired of sleeping by herself at night. Tired of her sex toys too. She craved a man's touch, not just silicone vibrators. Those things were handy, but nothing beat a real man.

Besides, she didn't want to end up like her mother. She was a cranky woman with high expectations who had a knack for driving everybody around her away when they got too close, including her own husband and daughter. When her father had died in the Gulf War, her mother became an unbearable bitch. She'd died shortly after Mara graduated from college. Mara just didn't want to be like her. Alone and bitter until the end.

Mara decided to look for Arrain. She strode to the door and yanked the door handle. Immediately, she walked into a solid bulk. Mara yelped and stepped back, feeling embarrassed. "I...I'm sorry. Didn't see you there."

Mara blinked. She couldn't help but feel impressed with the second hunk she'd met in a day. She guessed he must be Arrain's bodyguard from the way he was dressed. Like Arrain, the man's height towered above her. Her mouth fell open. He was one delicious prime stud with glorious gladiator muscles who was wrapped in black leather and tight-fitting clothes, with killing paraphernalia tucked into his belt and boot straps. His skin, hair, and eyes were so pale, they starkly contrasted

with his dark ensemble. He was cute too. Large eyes. Sensuous lips. Damn. Terminally cute.

“Greetings, my lady.” The man bowed. “You’re awake. May I be of assistance?” His gaze skittered from her head to her toes. The man looked amused with the bedsheet she wore like a toga.

“I... Uhm. I’m looking for Arrain.”

“Then I shall notify His Majesty you’re ready for him.”

“That’s okay. I can look for him myself. Where is he?”

The man gave her a half bow again. “Please wait inside while I notify His Majesty. It will be just a moment.”

From his tone, she guessed she wasn’t allowed to leave this room. “Fine.”

“Much obliged, my lady.” Her nose was an inch away when the majestic double doors snapped shut.

Mara padded back to the bed and sat with both hands folded in her lap. Her heart thundered. Anxiety knifed her gut deep when she realized that if Arrain decided to dishonor his agreement with the Weaver, she could be stranded in this God-knows-where place forever. It wasn’t like they had an American embassy in Myria. If she became Arrain’s prisoner, she’d be royally screwed. And not in a good way.

When the doors opened, Mara expected to see Arrain walk in. Instead, a trio of scantily clad women entered the room. They were all slender and willowy and wrapped in pastel-colored fabric that barely covered their modesty. Each one carried a silver tray covered in red velvetlike fabric.

“Greetings, my lady.” One of the women curtsied. “My name is Isena, and these are my sisters, Casia and Rea. We are deeply honored His Majesty has chosen us as your handmaidens.”

Mara’s eyes rounded. Good Lord. Her handmaidens? “I don’t think I need maids. I can take care of myself. But thanks, though.”

They placed the trays on the bed. Isena cast her a warm smile while her sisters giggled mischievously. Their voices sounded like songbirds'. "His Majesty's order, my lady. We are to assist you with your clothes. What you're wearing right now is hardly adequate for a noblewoman such as you."

Noblewoman? Mara shook her head. "I'm not a noblewoman. I'm just..."

Her handmaidens' chatter drowned her words.

"...lovely tresses. Just like His Majesty."

"...marvelous skin. So silky."

"...rare coloring. How curious."

Rare? Curious? Now Mara felt like she was one of those tropical birds from the exotic pet shop. "Uhm, ladies, I..."

"We should take this silly sheet from you, my lady. His Majesty wishes you to be clad in appropriate attire."

Mara let herself be led into a nearby chair. Isena's sisters pulled the sheet off her. "You'll give me clothes?"

Isena uncovered one of the trays and proffered a skimpy outfit just like the ones they were wearing. Only this one had more elaborate decorative stitching and embellishments.

Mara snorted. "I can't wear that. It's too..."

"But you must. His Majesty wishes it," Isena insisted.

Mara rolled her eyes. So he wished it, huh? Men. So typical. "Don't you have other clothes that are decent?"

"Decent?" Casia piped in. "But this is a fine garment, my lady. Lady Gvynn wove the *sirthas* cocoons and hand-sewed this *yelu* herself."

"Sirthas? Yelu?"

"This would look splendid on you. Trust me." Isena ordered her sisters to fetch the other trays. "And we must make haste. His Majesty is waiting for you in the solarium."



Mara wanted to protest, but after brief consideration, she decided against it. If Arrain wanted to see her in the other room, wearing a sheet as a dress wouldn't be considered polite, would it? Swallowing her objection, she let Isena and her sisters squeeze her into the tight outfit called a yelu. She had trouble breathing afterward. Her breasts looked like they were about to explode. But her handmaidens seemed delighted.

"My lady, you look simply enchanting," Rea exclaimed. The three sisters giggled again.

*Oh brother.* Mara couldn't help but smile along with them. Maybe a gal with generous boobs was rare in this country.

After her handmaidens finished arranging her hair, Isena pulled a standing mirror from the bathroom so she could inspect their handiwork. Mara frowned when she saw her reflection. There was no way she was leaving this room dressed like this. The outfit was too revealing, and she wasn't exactly Miss Universe.

"Something wrong, my lady?" Isena noticed her frowning. "You aren't pleased with this yelu?"

"I shouldn't eat for a year if I want to wear something like this."

Isena and her sisters traded puzzled looks.

"Never mind." Mara snatched the bedsheet from the floor and covered herself with it. "I'm ready for Arrain."

"But, my lady..."

"We don't want him waiting, do we?"

The handmaidens didn't dare squeak a protest. Apparently, being the love interest of a king could rule out majority votes. Nepotism rocked. Mara strode to the door and rapped on it twice. The cute guard opened it and bowed. A faint smile hovered on the corners of his lips.

"I want to see Arrain."

He bowed his head again. "Please follow me, my lady."

That was easy. She half expected the guard would have something to say about her bedsheet, but it seemed he liked to keep his thoughts to himself. He led her through a maze of tall corridors. Every so often, they met guards who were posted at other entrances and doors. She found the security in this palace pretty damn tight. One couldn't just waltz in and out of this place without the guards noticing. After they strolled across an enormous hall, he stopped at some majestic doors. He gave her another bow and pushed the doors open.

Mara's mouth fell open.

Beyond the doors was a cavernous atrium that was too grandly majestic to be called a solarium. The gilded arches of the dome were so high, they seemed to touch the heavens. Under the crystal clear glass panels, Mara could see the evening sky stretched before her eyes, adorned with the twinkle of thousands of stars. She wasn't much of a stargazer aficionado, but she had to admit the sight was breathtaking.

Her gaze drifted to the middle of the dome. She saw Arrain standing by a giant stone-carved, round pool. He smiled and motioned her to come closer. Mara waded her way through the jungle of alien plants in full bloom. She didn't recognize any of them. They weren't like any plant on Earth, but they looked so pretty and were delightfully fragrant. The air was thick with the scent of flowers; it was almost intoxicating.

"Did you have your rest?" Arrain asked. He had changed into different clothes. The dark tunic with matching pants looked fabulous on his tall frame. His hair was pulled back and braided neatly. Mara found him breathtakingly sexy.

"Kind of. Your palace is magnificent."

"All of this will be yours when you are my queen."

Mara cringed. "No kidding."

"Do I look like I'm jesting to you?"

"I suppose you're not." She sat at the ledge of the pool. Her gaze darted upward toward the glass dome. Her curiosity was piqued. "So I assume this place is underground?"

He sat next to her. "That is correct."

"Then why do you have stars?"

Arrain looked up. "Oh. Those aren't stars. They're *samillye*."

"Sam—what?"

"Enchanted rocks that give us light as the sun does in your world. Without *samillye*, we couldn't grow plants and crops."

"Wow. Have you been into my world? To see the real stars?"

His expression darkened. "No."

"Oh? Why not?"

"My family's geis. I'm not allowed to break it. I can't go to the surface."

Geis? Was that some kind of curse? "Why?"

"It's a long story." Arrain dismissed her question. "But I've seen your true stars and moon and sun. Through this mirrormar." He flicked his wrist over the circular pool. The placid water rippled from his movement. The waves twirled to the center and disappeared.

Mara's jaw dropped when she saw a vision of a blue sky and the sun emerge from the surface of the water. The picture was distorted, as if someone were swimming in the deep water and trying to look up to the surface.

"My family has been the keepers of the lifeblood of your Earth since the world was newly forged. In the old days, when nymphs still roamed freely on the surface world, we made sure every living thing on Earth would never go thirsty."

Mara turned to him. His jade eyes looked somber. "And now?"

A bitter smile emerged momentarily. "Not anymore. Humans have plagued the world with their never-ending greed, wars, and pestilence; sharing the world with your kind has become impossible for us. Thus, our elders and others chose a

Separation.” His gaze settled on her. “We’ve become the Unseens. Some of our kind are still living aboveground in a different realm than yours while my people chose to live below the ground.” He spread his hands. “In here.”

She found the story about Arrain and his people fascinating. So he was a nymph, eh? A nymph king. A hot nymph king. How cool was that? “If your ancestors don’t like humans, why do you want to have a human wife?”

“Aren’t you a curious one?”

“To me, marriage is a lifetime commitment. Of course I want to know your angle.”

Arrain rose. He glided elegantly to a nearby stone platform and sat on a cushioned pillow. “Like I told you before, I desire a special woman as my queen. A human woman, not a nymph.”

“Why?”

“I find human females are very beautiful. Like you.”

Her cheeks warmed. “I’m not beautiful. I’m just an ordinary gal.”

“You’re wrong, Mara. You don’t find yourself beautiful? Is that why you prefer to cover those lovely curves of yours with my bedsheet?” Arrain motioned for her to sit by him. “Come here, sweet thing, and I shall show you how beautiful you are.”

*Good Lord.* Her brain went to mush when she realized where this was going. “I... Uhm...”

Arrain watched her, waiting. “Mara?”

Her anxiety started creeping in. “I...”

“It’s cold and hard where you’re sitting. You won’t like it when I take you there.”

*Take me? Hey.*

“It’s much more comfortable here.”

*Well. It sure does look it.* She took a deep breath and pushed her nervousness to the back of her mind. *That’s it. This is what I want. No more Miss Prude. I’m*

*tired of being lonely.* Mara gathered her courage and scrambled up from the ledge of the pool. Her first step toward Arrain felt like salvation, as if she had just found her way out from the long, dark tunnel to embrace the white light.

The nymph king smiled. His brilliant jade eyes sparkled with each of her steps toward him. Mara climbed up the platform and took his outstretched hand. She tumbled into his embrace. God. It was heaven. His warmth soothed her. She felt at home, and that was a wonderful feeling.

“My beauty,” he purred, stroking her cheek. “Mine.”

## Chapter Three

“Kiss me.” She seemed hesitant to respond to his demand, but the fire in her eyes told him otherwise. Arrain drew her closer and whispered, “Kiss me, beautiful.”

Mara palmed his face and blanketed his lips with hers. Her kiss was tentative at first, but when Arrain kissed her back, her inhibition seemed to loosen. She was a ferocious kisser, like himself, greedy and demanding. He loved women with passion.

Her face looked dreamy when he broke the kiss. Goddess, was she beautiful. Arrain needed more of her. All of her. Everything she had to offer. He pulled down the bedsheet that covered her body. “This sheet has no business hiding your beauty, sweet thing.” She was everything he’d ever wanted in a woman.

Her chest rose and fell. His mouth watered. Although she looked splendid in the yelu, he preferred her to show her bare skin. He undressed her. Arrain touched her fevered skin, amazed at how it felt. He had heard humans were hot-blooded beings, but he had never guessed she would be this hot. She was burning, and he absolutely loved it.

She squirmed under him. A seductive mewl escaped from her throat when he palmed her breast and squeezed it. Her eyes glittered. He knew she liked what he did to her. And when he pinched her nipple and rolled it between his thumb and forefinger, she let out a low, rumbling sigh, an unmistakable sign of a woman in ecstasy. Arrain just had to taste her other nipple. She keened when he sucked her. Mara gripped his hair and dug her fingers into his scalp. “Arrain!”

Hmm. She got his name right this time.

He deepened his sucks until she flinched, whimpered, and trembled. He bruised her, marked her, and tasted what was meant to be his. Arrain felt ravenous. He wanted to explore every inch of her skin and discover all of her delights.

“I...” She closed her thighs when he slid a hand on her mons.

“What’s the matter, sweet thing?” Arrain kissed the side of her jaw and nipped her earlobe. “Don’t be shy. I want to know you better. Very”—he paused, examining her reaction—“intimately.”

She flustered. “Oh God.”

“Open.”

“I still think this is not a good id—”

“Open.” He emphasized what he wanted. He wasn’t fond of being denied his prize. This beauty was his to own. To possess.

She obeyed him. Her expression looked unsure as she parted her thighs. The blush on her face deepened. Mara looked embarrassed being touched this way. Arrain wondered if all human women were this reserved. Female nymphs were never shy about their sexuality. “Mara, look at me,” he commanded as he cupped her mound. Her eyes widened. She didn’t seem accustomed to being ordered around. He parted her curls and stroked her wet seam. Her cunt was even hotter than her skin, and her wetness made his cock ache in his britches. He brushed his lips on hers, praising her beauty.

She loosened her grip on his hair and clutched his shoulders.

Arrain found her clitoris and circled it gently. She squirmed. “Tell me this isn’t good?” She moaned. He slipped a finger into her entrance and circled her opening with the tip of his finger like he had with her clit. Her breath was labored. She creamed. He was delighted with her reaction.

She stiffened when he decided to bury his finger into her channel. The tight walls of her pussy felt soft and silken like a velvet glove, clenching him like a vise.

He mashed his palm against her vulva and fucked her cunt as he would with his cock, which he planned to do very soon. Her back arched with the rhythm of his strokes. When she became very wet, he inserted a second finger and fucked her hard. Mara clawed his flesh. Her spine stretched out, then kinked from the pleasure. “Arrain!”

“Yes, sweet thing?”

“I-I...”

He quickened his strokes until her cry broke. She climaxed. Her expression contorted in pure pleasure. Her whole body shook. Arrain kissed her as she was engulfed in ecstasy. Her cunt contracted around his fingers, enveloping him in a delicious tide of shivers.

When he tore his mouth from hers, she had bathed his hand. The intoxicating aroma of her arousal assaulted his senses, flaring his lust ablaze. Mara watched him with confusion when he withdrew his fingers and licked her juices. She tasted even better than he had imagined. Goddess. A fervent hunger swept over him. Arrain salivated. He wanted to lap and splurge on her nectar directly from the source.

Mara knew what he intended to do when he trailed wet kisses from her chin to her cleavage, her belly, and down her pubis. But nothing had prepared her for the shocking intensity when he wrenched her legs wider and dived onto her pussy. His first lick reeled her into a maddening need. She yelled, gasping, instinctively grabbing his hair to pull him away. She wasn’t accustomed to having someone treat her private parts like his personal lollipop. She had always been shy when it came to oral sex, and her nonexistent dating life made her almost a virgin in the licking department. She thought his finger-fucking skills were amazing, but his mouth—holy hell—his mouth was treacherous.

Mara bucked and writhed, begging him to stop, but what she did only made him more excited. Arrain was strong. He kept her pinned on the pillow with little



effort. She had no choice but to surrender to his will as he licked each of her sex lips. Licked her clit. Licked her with such finesse that the impact truly devastated her. New fire singed her sex, incinerating her alive. He paused and made some delighted noises before his tongue slid into her pussy.

“Arrain!” She shook. Each stroke of his tongue dragged her deeper into maddening ecstasy. She didn’t know that being worshipped would feel this good. As she lay there shaking, her heart pounded, her breath labored, and every fiber of her being burned with unadulterated pleasure. Arrain took one last lick that sent her over the edge. She climaxed. Hard. Her scream ripped out of her throat as the world faded from her view.

When she floated into reality once more, she found him slowly rising from her splayed thighs, his eyes wide, his nostrils flared as if he were a beast ready to pounce on its prey. He licked his lips like a cat savoring its cream, and when he spoke, his voice was dark and husky. “I must. Have you. Now.”

His words sent a wicked thrill down her spine. “*Have you. Now.*” Her pussy clenched. Her eyes were glued on him as he tossed his long braided hair to his back and proceeded to disrobe. He shoved his pants down, freeing his straining cock from its confinement.

A keening whimper curled from her throat when she saw his cock. Her pussy ached in agreement. His cock was as beautiful as the rest of him. Massive. Throbbing. She felt dizzy just looking at him, and she imagined having him inside her. Mara tore her eyes from him and collapsed on the cushion. She had just had two explosive orgasms in a row, and already her body longed for another. She had never been this wanton, nor had she ever been this easily aroused. His touches and kisses made her a slave to her desire.

Arrain kissed the hollow of her throat. She whimpered in anticipation. His heat seared her; his naked skin, slick with perspiration, grazed her fevered skin. The very contact sent a jolt of ecstatic shivers through her body. She snuggled closer, wanting more of his heat. Her gaze drifted down. He pumped his cock in

languid strokes. She saw him leaking, droplets of pearly white cream blossoming from his slit.

After a dozen pumps, he let go of his cock and grabbed her thighs, splaying her open. Her heart hammered in her throat when he pressed his groin to hers. His cock felt sinfully hot against her naked skin. His granite shaft, thick and long, almost reached to her belly. His size intimidated her, but her body rebelled against common sense; it had never been this ready to fuck.

He didn't take her right away. He only oiled his shaft with her abundant juices. Bracing with one arm beside her head, he eased back and forth, slicking his cock on her burning pussy. Arrain watched her reaction as he continued to make himself wet with her glistening cream. "Let me know when you're ready," he rasped.

Was he kidding? She'd been beyond ready since she saw him naked. Mara gulped. "I'm ready."

"Are you sure?"

She growled. "Yes, yes, I'm—"

He penetrated her without warning. His fat cockhead speared her open, ripping her sanity to pieces. She grabbed his shoulders, digging her nails into his flesh. The pleasure was unbelievable. And wicked. He slipped in, not much, only an inch. He stopped, gauging her reaction, as if looking for any evidence he was hurting her. He wasn't. She blew out a long breath as every fiber of her being screamed in need. She needed more of him. More. All of him.

"Shh, shh. I won't hurt you. Trust me." He pushed and slid in another inch. Then another. She moaned. He thrust again and plowed her until she felt beyond full.

"Holy shit." Mara gasped for air. She had never been stretched this way before. Her pussy contracted around his hard shaft. Her gaze drifted to their joining flesh. He hadn't penetrated her all the way. There were a good few inches of him left. Mara felt dazed. "No way."

"Oh. You will take all of me." He sounded firm. "Just relax."

“Relax?” she screeched. “Mister, you could kill a woman with—”

He silenced her with a kiss, muffling her protest. Arrain plunged his tongue into her mouth, plundering it as roughly as his cock was plundering her pussy. He fisted her hair as he suddenly rained slam upon slam of battering fucks, branding her with the fire of his lust. He tore his mouth off hers, giving her a chance to breathe. She mewled, whined, her throat feeling raw from all the screaming. Each thrust and yank was rough; the pleasure commingled with the pain felt so mind-bendingly exquisite. She’d never had a man love her so hard, so blatantly savage; he fucked like he meant it, as if it would kill him if he didn’t show her he was the master of her body.

Mara clawed his shoulders. The pleasure dragged her higher, toward rapture, making her heart pound and heat rush to her head.

He kissed her. “You feel so good, sweet thing. I want this to last forever.”

His declaration made her giddy. He was a stranger, and she’d thought she hit an all-time high when she allowed herself to fall for his seduction, but the way he loved her felt so right she was baffled. She’d never thought sex could be so intense that she wanted to faint. When Arrain lunged and battered her with a series of short fucks, Mara surrendered and climaxed.

She bit his shoulder at the height of her rapture. Salty, coppery flavor flooded her mouth as her breath was cut off from her lungs. She gulped. Her pussy clenched his shaft so tightly she heard Arrain groan.

“That’s it, sweet thing,” he cooed with a soft voice. “Goddess, you’re so beautiful.”

She didn’t know how long she was trapped in the rapturous torrent of pleasure, but when she did finally swim out, she found Arrain watching her with unmistakable triumph in his eyes. He wrapped her in his arms, whispering endearments that made her want to melt into a puddle of goo. She would have collapsed if she weren’t already lying on her back. Mara noticed something else. “You didn’t come?” His cock was still hard in her pussy, throbbing.

Arrain laughed. “You’re silly. It would take me more than a romp to sate my appetite.” He lowered his head and kissed her. “And I intend tonight to last.”

Mara blinked, feeling surreal. Insatiable man. She was starting to think she’d gotten more than she had bargained for when she wished for that perfect lover from the Dangerous Curves Web site.

## Chapter Four

Mara thought she was still dreaming when she felt a warm male body spooning her in a tight, possessive embrace as she stirred hours later. Her eyes flew open when she remembered what had happened. Dangerous Curves. Myria. Arrain. They weren't just figments of her imagination. The dull aches between her thighs bore the testament of their fiery lovemaking. Her heart skipped a beat. Mara quickly turned around and found herself face-to-face with a muscular chest. Her eyes darted up. Arrain greeted her with a smile.

"You're awake. Still tired?"

"No," she answered. She was fully awake now. "What time is it?"

"Midnight."

"Oh." Mara looked upward, toward the arch of the solarium. The dark sky with thousands of brilliant fake stars stretched on in her field of vision. "Only midnight? I thought I'd slept until morning."

"Our time runs longer than the surface world." Arrain sat up. He groped her naked thigh, stroking her gently. "You sore?"

Her cheeks burned. Yes, she was sore, but she wasn't going to tell him that. They had fucked like a pair of crazed bunnies for the past several hours and in many positions she'd never thought of trying even in her wildest imagination. Arrain had given her more orgasms in a night than she'd had in a lifetime. Mara shook her head. "I'm fine."

"You sure? I want to take you out to see Myria. But if you're too tired, we could do it tomorrow."

A tour of his kingdom? Hell yeah. Mara scrambled up. "Sure. I'd love to." She looked down, searching for her discarded outfit. Her top was nowhere to be found. Her skimpy skirt dangled on the edge of the circular pool, and the bedsheet lay crumpled by the foot of the dais. *Is it too weird to go out in bedsheet?* "But you must give me proper clothes," she added.

A smile blossomed on his face. "Would this be considered proper?" Arrain snatched his tunic and handed it to her.

"That would do." Arrain's tunic was huge, but it would be roomy for her to wear and could cover all her modesty. Mara got up and donned it. The hem came down to her knees and the sleeves dangled far beyond her hands, but she didn't care. With this, Mara didn't have to worry about spilling-over boobs or being asphyxiated by her clothes.

"You're silly, you know that?" Arrain rose, putting on his pants. "You look very lovely in yelu."

"Skimpy outfits aren't my style."

Arrain chuckled. "Come."

Mara took his hand, and he led her to the circular pool, the mirrormar. "I thought you were going to give me a tour?"

"Yes."

"Then why are we going swimming?"

"Incognito. We can go to any part of Myria from mirrormar. If we go through the front door, my guards will fuss with the formal procession. They're a royal pain sometimes."

Mara chuckled. She remembered the cute guard who hadn't allowed her to roam outside her room. She studied the mirrormar, wondering how deep it was. The water looked placid with unfathomable depth. She wasn't much of a swimmer herself, wasn't sure if she could hold her breath long enough to swim underwater to wherever Arrain wanted to take her.

Arrain swung his legs over the ledge and dipped himself into the pool. The water only came to his hips. Mara blinked, feeling bewildered. “The water is shallow.”

“Well, yes.”

“I thought this was connected to an underground tunnel or something.”

“Mirrormar is a magic pool, sweet thing. Come.”

Mara followed suit. Since she was much shorter than Arrain, the water swallowed her up to her chest. She shivered. The water was freezing.

“Cold?” Arrain wrapped his arms around her. “It takes a while to get used to it.”

Easy for him to say. She wasn’t a water nymph.

“Ready?”

Mara nodded, her teeth chattering.

Arrain yanked her down. Mara gasped in panic. They were both lurched into the bottom of the pool, which now seemed endless. Just like her bathtub shortly before she was kidnapped into this magical land. Mara instinctively grabbed his shoulders and clung to them tightly. Panic rose within her. Her lungs demanded oxygen. Mara held on as long as she could as the two of them were sucked into an underground whirlpool.

She closed her eyes, trying to stave off her need for air. But she couldn’t hold on any longer. She needed air. Soon. Now.

*“You don’t need to do that. You can breathe underwater while you’re with me.”*

Arrain’s voice echoed in her mind. Mara opened her eyes in surprise. She gasped. Water flooded her throat and nose. Strangely, she found she had no need for air anymore. As if her lungs had been replaced by gills, the water felt fine and comforting. Air bubbles streamed out from her mouth when she tried to talk. She abandoned her attempt to tell Arrain she was okay. He couldn’t hear her anyway.

The unseen power that sucked them down stopped, and they were propelled upward. Mara only saw dazzling blurs around them, until all of a sudden, they emerged out in the open. She sputtered water from her mouth.

They'd ended up in some kind of narrow river flanked by grassy pastures. Arrain grabbed her waist and paddled to the shore. Mara was busy coughing when she heard Arrain curse. A rowboat came toward them. A bulky man perched at the helm of the boat, rowing slowly. Mara recognized him as Arrain's cute guard.

Arrain helped her climb up the embankment. He looked irritated. Arrain crossed his arms in front of his chest when the boat finally stopped.

"Greetings, Your Highness." The guard inclined his head. "I thought you might need assistance."

"I can't get rid of you, can I?"

The guard grinned.

"Maeglin can be a pest sometimes," Arrain said. "I've never been able to get him off my back. He always finds me wherever I go."

So his name was Maeglin. He must be really loyal to his king to follow Arrain anywhere he went. She wondered how he'd known Arrain was playing hooky from the palace and followed them here that fast. Magic? Duh, what else? After encountering so many paranormal phenomena for the past few hours, she guessed anything was possible in this place. The hulking guard rowed his boat to the edge of the grassy embankment. Arrain stepped into it, and then he helped Mara in. She sat on the bench, gripping Arrain's arm when the boat rocked too much. It balanced a few minutes later after Maeglin did something with his oar. He pushed the small boat back to the middle of the river. Maeglin rowed in silence, as if he was making himself unobtrusive. It seemed he was accustomed to being Arrain's shadow.

Mara let go of Arrain's arm. They sat knee to knee as the boat sliced through the calm river. She studied her surroundings. Trees and bushes grew lushly on the green pasture. Two rocky mountains with frozen peaks framed the horizon under the dark, starry sky. The midnight breeze was scented with the same fragrance of



flowers from Arrain's solarium, and the song of cicadas serenaded them from afar. Mara took a deep breath. It felt so peaceful. She liked this place already.

Even though she was dripping wet, Mara didn't feel cold. Actually, she felt rejuvenated, like someone who'd just had a long nap and a nice shower. Maybe the midnight swimming had done that to her.

Arrain took her hand and covered it with his, holding her tightly. He watched her with a look that could melt arctic ice. His eyes burned her. Hunger. Lust. And adoration. Mara felt hot all of a sudden. She had never been ogled by a good-looking guy before. It felt weird, but flattering as hell.

"You're beautiful," he whispered.

Her face flushed. "I'm def—"

"Shhhh." Arrain placed a finger on her lips. "Don't fight me on this one, would you?"

"I'm just being realistic."

Arrain's lush lashes lowered. His gaze softened. "Realistic? I feel there's more to it. Did someone hurt you before?"

Mara stilled. She didn't feel like discussing her problems. Even though she'd shared his bed, she wasn't ready to share her personal hell with him. Yet.

She schooled a smile. "Nah." Mara then quickly changed the subject. "What happens to this place during daytime?"

Arrain's eyes drifted up. He seemed to understand she didn't feel like answering his question. "Our night is longer than daytime, but yes, we do have a substitute for sunlight. You see that bright samillye?" He pointed to one enchanted starlike rock. "Every twentieth hour, Star of Beohrn exudes a bright glow that rivals your sun for six hours straight. Then she fades for another cycle until she's ready to shine once again."

Mara found Myria more fascinating by the minute. What else hadn't she discovered? She wanted to know everything. "Where're we going?"

“Ah.” Arrain squeezed her hand. “If you want to see the true Myria, the best place to go is the Soul Market.”

“Soul Market?” Mara echoed.

“The name frightens you? In the Old Days, that place is where the otherworldly folks bought and sold enslaved human souls.”

Mara’s eyes widened. “You people could do that?”

“Not since the Separation. The practice is strictly forbidden. Nowadays, the Soul Market is just another market where my people trade and earn their daily bread. But many from other regions go there as well because it’s located at the threshold of Myria’s border.”

“You’re saying Myria isn’t the only kingdom in here?”

“No. You don’t think nymphs are the only creatures in this realm, do you?”

“You have...others? What are they?”

“That, my dear, is for you to find out.”

“Are we there yet?”

“Soon, sweet thing. It’s not far from here.”

Mara waited with anticipation. Their boat slowly glided through the calm river. After a while, the river became wider and wider, until they entered a vast lake. Mara’s mouth fell open when she noticed thousands of flickering lights welcoming them as Maeglin gently rowed forward. When they got close enough, she found out those lights were coming from lanterns. The Soul Market was actually a floating market. Hundred of boats and rafts, large and small, sailed on the vast water.

Maeglin paused from rowing the boat and took a bundle from under his bench. He handed it to Arrain. It was a pair of dark cloaks. Arrain donned one and motioned for Mara to wear the other. She obeyed. The black muslin cloak was large enough to swallow her into the darkness, making her blend with the surroundings. Arrain pulled up his hood.

“Why do we have to wear these?” Mara asked Arrain.

“I prefer we stay incognito.”

“Oh.” She could see why Arrain wanted them to don the robes. If his people recognized their king coming to visit, they probably wouldn’t leave him alone.

Their boat moved forward, joining the stream of other boats into the heart of the market. This place wasn’t like any other she’d ever been to before. The Soul Market also housed many establishments. She saw restaurants perched on gigantic rafts. Hundreds of festive lanterns decorated their windows. Pretty girls dressed in long, colorful, wispy gowns waved handkerchiefs, beckoning prospective patrons to visit their restaurants. Wonderful aromas wafted all around them. Something baked. Something grilled. Steamed. Sautéed. Mara’s stomach growled.

Besides restaurants, Mara saw other establishments that stole her attention. One gigantic boat docked near a pier housed the tallest structure in the Soul Market. The sign on the boat was written in hieroglyphics she couldn’t read, but guessing from the stream of people in and out, that boathouse was very popular. More pretty women and men dressed in skimpy outfits lounged in the main entrance, greeting the patrons. Some of the women and men frolicked and even made out with the guests. Some bargained. Mara also saw a couple arguing by the aft of the boat.

“It’s a pleasure house,” Arrain muttered in her ear.

A brothel? Whoa. Mara craned her neck. She had never seen a brothel before, let alone one that catered to mystic beings. More delicious food aromas drifted from the boathouse, accompanied by loud music and the noise of people partying. She guessed that place wasn’t only providing the patrons with carnal delights, but also with food and amusement.

“Are those people all nymphs?” Mara asked Arrain.

“No. Some of them are sirens, fairies, dragons, and elemental spirits—the Unseens. I forgot you can’t see past their glamour.” Arrain placed a hand on Mara’s

face, forcing her to close her eyes. When he removed it, Mara witnessed a sight that made her gasp.

*Holy crap.*

Some people still looked like human, but many looked like beings from the fairy tales she'd read when she was little. On the small boat they passed by, she saw a toadlike person selling fresh fruits and vegetables. Some of the pretty girls in the restaurants sported scales and beaks. Some had wings behind their backs.

Mara rubbed her eyes to make sure she wasn't hallucinating. Nope. Everything she saw was real. She even saw mermaids lounging by the pier of the pleasure house. The moonlight made the scales on their fish tails glimmer and their long hair shimmer. "Amazing," Mara said. She turned to Arrain. "Is this your true form?"

Arrain laughed. "I'm a water nymph, so yes. What's the matter? Disappointed?"

"No, no. I'm just curious. That's all."

"Myria provides a safe haven to those who seek peace. As long as they're not creating nuisances, I welcome them with open arms."

He spoke about his people with such fire, as if each one of them really mattered. "So they're refugees?"

"Mostly."

"Are you at war with the others?"

"Presently, no. Many have tried to take over Myria in the past, but they've failed. My family's magic protects this land from aggressors. You see there? Blue lights from afar?"

Mara squinted. She noticed it now, the faint glow in the horizon that stretched as far as her eyes could see. "Yeah."

"It's Myria's border. One with foul intentions can't cross our threshold."

Mara found the whole thing incredible. Arrain wasn't just a king who ruled a land, but he was also passionate about his people's well-being. Besides being a perfect lover, he was also a good-hearted man she'd want to bring home and introduce to her family. The more she knew him, the more she admired him deeply.

He took her hand and covered it with his. "All of this is useless if I don't have someone to share it with, Mara. I sincerely hope you'll stay. Be my wife, my queen, and my best friend."

*Oh God.* Her heart fluttered. Arrain's hand tightened on hers. "I'm not rushing you to make a decision, but I wish this was something you'd consider. Make me a happy man, Mara. Stay with me. Forever."

Mara swallowed hard. Being needed, wanted, was something she'd craved for a long time. However, she still wasn't sure. Their worlds were too different. She was human. Arrain was a nymph. There were plenty of questions and matters to discuss before she could give him an answer. But one thing was for sure. Mara had fallen in love with this man already.

\* \* \*

Arrain watched Mara as the handmaidens groomed her the next morning. He couldn't help but be amused. It seemed she wasn't accustomed to being attended while bathing and dressing. Mara insisted on doing everything herself, which was unacceptable for a future queen. She also wasn't fond of the garment he had chosen for her to wear. "*Too revealing,*" she'd said with a scowl. Arrain didn't understand the humans' fascination with wearing too much fabric. "This yelu looks lovely on you, sweet thing."

"It's a bikini top and a wrap. You didn't even give me panties! You expect me to go out to see your friends dressed like a cheap streetwalker?"

"My court," he corrected. "I need to introduce my future queen to them."

She looked taken aback by his plan. "Oh-ho, wait a minute, I never agreed to this. I can't go out in public dressed like this."

“Why not?”

“It’s embarrassing.”

“What is there to be embarrassed about? I find you the embodiment of true beauty.”

She snorted. “Corny. I didn’t know you were such a smooth talker.”

“Smooth talker?”

“Honey tongue. Sweet-talker.”

“I am no such thing. I speak the truth.”

“Yeah, right.”

Arrain seized her face and bestowed a deep kiss upon it. Why was it so hard to convince her she was worthy of every praise? He found her beautiful, inside and out. Hei wouldn’t have delivered her as his perfect match if she hadn’t seen quality in Mara’s personality. And besides, Mara held the key to his future.

And the future of Myria.

Scolded by fate and cursed by the gods, Arrain knew he was running out of time. His spawning season was almost over, and if he died without an heir, Myria would plunge into chaos. Many coveted his domain, as it sat on the purest water source of the Earth. As a descendent of Lir, the water god who commanded respect from many Underworld beings, Arrain had no problems warding off plunderers with his powers. But without an heir, the future of Myria was at stake. And it had all begun when his father broke the geis.

Since the Separation, the Council of the Underworld had forbidden nymphs and Unseens to mate with humans and produce offspring. They could take humans as lovers, but siring or carrying the crossbred fruit of those unions was strictly forbidden. The rule was broken when his father desired an heir from his mother. He had made a pact with a Dark Weaver in order to sire Arrain.

As far as Arrain could remember, he had been considered an oddity, from the color of his hair to the uncanny power he wielded over water. When he was growing

up, many had predicted he would carry an ill omen. When a geis was invoked, someone would pay the price. The elders' fears were proven when he took his first queen and sired a child. His world had crumbled apart when he woke up one morning to find his infant heir had stopped breathing. Gavin's funeral flowers hadn't even wilted when Callista collapsed into sickness and slowly wasted to her death. Then everyone whispered behind his back about the geis.

The Gods had punished him for his father's sin.

Arrain cleared a stray lock from Mara's face, admiring her tiny onyx braids. His fondness for her had become an obsession, as if years of celibacy had finally caught up with him. Nymphs were sexual creatures.

He brushed his thumb over Mara's pouty lips—lips he loved to kiss. He had missed this kind of intimacy, the warmth of a woman skin's and companionship. After Callista's passing, he'd avoided women like plague, to the point he was even scared to touch one.

The loss had been too great for him to bear.

But Hei had assured him he wouldn't become a death omen to the women surrounding him. The geis only prevented him from siring future offspring with full-blooded nymphs; therefore, it had taken his son and wife.

Because he couldn't mate with female nymphs, having Mara as his queen was his only hope of Myria's survival. Although the danger could still be lurking. The elders and Hei couldn't give him any guarantee that he wouldn't doom his future human queen to death.

His heart ached. Hurting Mara was the last thing he ever wanted to do. But he was also desperate. He needed her as badly as he needed his next breath. Having spent an unforgettable night with Mara, he was sure he'd go insane if he let her return to the surface world, never to be seen again.

Arrain was torn.

But again, Mara was his only hope. "I don't lie, beauty. Are you hungry? Let us dine, then meet my court. They are dying to see you."

“In these clothes? Nah. I don’t think so.”

*Not again.* Arrain exhaled a deep breath. “You look lovely in your yelu.”

“I’m far from lovely.”

“Why do you have such a low opinion of yourself?” He took her hand and placed it on his hard erection. “If I didn’t find you desirable, I wouldn’t have this, would I?”

She snorted. “Arrain, dear, you’re horny all the time...”

He kissed her to silence her objection. Arrain didn’t want to hear any more silly arguments from her. “I’m famished. Shall we?”

\* \* \*

The nymphs’ food was the most delicious thing to ever slide down her throat. Unlike the other mystical beings she had seen at the Soul Market, the nymphs didn’t consume meat, nor did they cook everything they ate. She didn’t recognize any of the fruits or vegetables they served, but she was amazed at how good they tasted. She was a meat-and-potatoes kind of gal, but she’d be happy to turn into a vegan if someone fed her like this every day.

The nymphs didn’t consume alcohol either. The only drink they served was the nectar of the fruit and their prized water called pure, which was collected from Gairnwell, the river said to be the lifeblood of the Earth. The water was very clear; it actually sparkled when she held the glass under the light. It had a sweet aftertaste that lingered long after she had drunk it. One glass wasn’t enough. It was addictive. If she didn’t know better, she would have thought someone had laced it with crack.

After they finished their meal, Arrain took her to meet his court. His throne room looked like a fantasy pool. Mara had a hard time keeping her face straight. She was certain grinning like an idiot would be considered rude. But how could she not? Like every part of Arrain’s palace she’d seen so far, the throne room was huge. It was a sunken pool complete with an enormous fountain that spewed crystal clear



water, with giant water lilies growing in places. With almost naked nymphs lounging everywhere, the place looked like a hedonistic paradise.

Arrain led her onto the dais in the middle of the pool. The moment she stepped into the water, all eyes were glued on her. Mara felt self-conscious again. The last time she'd had so many people staring at her was when Ben stranded her on the day of their wedding. She remembered how lost she'd felt waiting for that asshole to come while three hundred guests bombarded her with pitiful stares. The memory of the worst day of her life still haunted her every now and then.

As if he sensed her hesitation, Arrain pulled her into his lap. She tumbled into his welcoming arms with a yelp. He laughed and stroked her cheek as if she were his beloved pet. Mara wasn't used to public displays of affection. She felt awkward. But she must admit it was flattering as hell. Having a gorgeous man treat her as if she was the center of his universe was something she had always fantasized about.

"In our culture, a queen's proper place is in her master's lap," Arrain told her in a matter-of-fact tone.

Mara snorted. *Master's lap*. That sounded like something from a bondage novel. She should have expected this kind of strange custom, considering how oversexed these nymphs were.

"But I'm not your queen," she corrected him. Although, when she thought about it, the idea was very tempting. She'd pondered the prospect of being Arrain's queen while they dined. It would be an interesting change of lifestyle. No more dead-end job. No more cramped apartment. No more boring life. When she pondered it again, it freaked her out as well. Arrain wasn't human. Was she ready to make that drastic, life-changing decision?

Arrain cast her a chastising look. His brow furrowed. "Not yet, but I will make you mine."

"This is the way you people court a woman? You don't give much choice on the woman's part, do you?"

“A gentleman’s privilege.” She couldn’t tell whether he was serious or just teasing her. Arrain straightened in his seat and lifted his arm to call his subjects’ attention. The murmurs stopped.

She threw her gaze to the floor, studying her feet as Arrain made a speech to his court, introducing her as his mate. The nymphs applauded each time he finished a sentence, and when Arrain announced the something festivity had officially begun, the room filled with thunderous claps and exclamations.

Good Lord. What the hell had happened?

Mara lifted her gaze to see what was going on. The music started, and the maids filled the room with trays of food. Apparently, this was a party. A lavish one too. Mara studied Arrain’s guests. All female nymphs wore yelus, while the males dressed like barbarians. Bare-chested, tight-leather-pants ensembles. Yummy. Mara felt like she was in a Roman orgy. If Arrain had been dressed in a toga with a wreath made from laurel leaves around his head, he’d fit right in.

She became uneasy when she saw some of the guests making out and fondling one another in public. One flaming-haired warrior-nymph snatched a passing maid and took her right by the pool. The maid squealed in delight and begged him to fuck her harder.

Okay, what the hell was going on? Seriously.

“Arrain.” Mara squeezed his wrist. “What kind of party is this?”

“Hmm?” He ran his hand on her thigh and stroked her languidly. “It’s a mating festival as a celebration of your arrival.”

“A what?” Her voice rose an octave. “Are you crazy?”

“It’s a joyous occasion, and thus we must celebrate it by sharing our pleasure.”

“Are you fucking nuts?” Mara tried to untangle from him. “I can’t watch this. I want to go back to my room.”

“Watch? Nay. My court expects you, as my future queen, to share your pleasure with the rest as well.”

Her brain imploded when she got a good grasp of what he was implying. Her limbs went numb. Her heart wanted to crawl into her throat. “Sh-sharing the p-pleasure?” she stammered. “You don’t mean...”

“I have to claim you in front of my court, sweet thing.”

*Oh my God.* Mara swallowed hard. She was mortified. Fucking a stranger in privacy was one thing. But fucking a guy with the entire world watching? Mara shivered. Suddenly the words “Librarians Gone Wild” flashed in her mind. “I don’t think so. I’m not that crazy.”

“Crazy?” Arrain’s penetrating gaze bore down on her.

Mara ground her teeth. “Where I come from, this kind of thing isn’t acceptable behavior.”

“How curious. We find expressing our love and pleasure with others to be a beautiful and natural thing to do.”

“That’s because you people are oversexed nut jobs. Let me go.” Mara yanked her arm away from him. “I’m going back to my room.”

“I think not. You will offend my court.”

“I don’t care. I’m human. Not a nymphomaniac like you.”

Arrain cocked his head to the side. “You aren’t?” His all-knowing smile spread across his handsome face. Her face burned when she caught his insinuation. Saying she was not a nymphomaniac would be a straight-up lie. Arrain had fucked her brains out yesterday, and the worst part was she had kept begging him for more until she collapsed in exhaustion. If that wasn’t a nympho, she didn’t know what was.

“Look. I don’t despise pleasure. I just don’t want to fuck in front of your people.”

“Why?”

“It’s rude.”

He lowered his head until their lips were a hairbreadth away. "You've never shared your pleasure with others?"

"Hell no!"

His chuckle erupted. "Then you should try it, my dear. We appreciate pleasure in all forms. Giving. Receiving. And sharing as well."

"You're crazy."

"Don't tell me the concept doesn't excite you."

Her throat tightened. Her pussy clenched. A drop of sexual moisture slipped out. "No."

Arrain purred. He slipped a hand to the juncture of her thighs. "Say what you want, sweet thing, but your body doesn't tell lies."

*Son of a bitch.* He'd caught her lying red-handed. Okay, she did have a fantasy about public indecency. Hers was a secret rendezvous in a train, where her lover would follow her into the lavatory and fuck her to oblivion, making conspicuous noises for other passengers to snicker about. But a fantasy was just a fantasy. Especially for an ordinary gal like her. It wasn't meant to be enacted quite literally. "A-Arrain..."

"Hush, my dear. Let me show you sharing pleasure with others is a liberating experience. You should indulge in your desires once in a while."

"I..." Her words evaporated in her throat when she found herself lying on her back. Arrain did something to her, magically, that caused her body to stick to the dais's marble surface. When she looked to her side, she saw glimmering water had bound her wrist to the floor. Shackled. With magic water. "Son of a bitch," she cursed out loud. "Arrain!"

"Yes, dear?"

"Let me go."

He laughed, rising from his seat and stepping into the pool. Mara writhed against her bonds, struggling in a futile attempt to free herself. She knew it was

useless, but she just couldn't help it. Instinct. Mara blew an exasperated sigh as her gaze fixed on Arrain. The man lounged lazily on a giant lily leaf. He looked weightless, despite his imposing bulk. Still, he was as deliciously tempting as sin. A female nymph glided to him, proffering a tray containing flasks of pure and a cup. Another nymph poured the addictive liquid for him. Arrain sipped it while watching Mara helpless in her bonds; a smirk hovered on the corner of his lips.

*That bastard.* Mara gritted her teeth. "Arrain! This isn't funny."

"No, it is not."

"Let me go." *Damn it.* Mara thrashed, splashing water everywhere. It seemed watching her struggle made him even friskier. So typical; men—nymphs or human—were all the same when it came to a half-naked, bound chick.

Arrain flicked his wrist, casting his magic. The water from the pool rose and rippled toward the dais. A pair of invisible hands grabbed her ankles and spread them apart. Her eyes widened as she felt something caress her skin. She whirled her head back to him. Judging from his expression, the man was up to no good.

"Arrain!"

"Yes, sweet thing?"

"Let me go."

"Mmm." He pretended to ponder. "I think not. You want me."

She felt pissed. "No, I don't."

"Liar."

Mara's breath stalled as he magically touched her inner thighs. Her flimsy skirt tore, ripped to pieces of its own accord, leaving her naked from the waist down. But he hadn't finished. Her tight bra disintegrated following the fate of her skirt, spilling her breasts free. Before long, he had her naked in front of his court. Her cheeks flushed. What was he thinking? She didn't mind being naked for him in her bedroom, but out in the open? With people watching? Was he out of his mind? She'd

like to smack the bastard hard. No, she wanted to choke him with her bare hands. It sounded more satisfying.

Her heart plummeted. Deep inside, she knew his tortures were far from over. A devilish nymph king like him must have tons of tricks up his sleeves. Arrain arranged himself comfortably, leaning on his side with one arm propping up his head. The air around her thinned as he yanked open his pants. She couldn't believe him. Talk about public indecency.

His magnificent cock strained free. Arrain grabbed his erection and pumped it with lazy, slow strokes. His eyes bore into her with intensity, as if he was imagining the dirty things he wanted to do to her. A whimper escaped her throat. He did something to her. A pair of invisible hands cupped her breasts and pinched her nipples, stimulating her languidly, the way he was stroking his cock. Deep-drawing sensations, wickedly sinful, thrummed from her nipples down to her sex, making her pussy clench. He shifted his gaze to her splayed legs as if he noticed her arousal. Arrain's eyes glittered. A mischievous smile exploded. Mara watched with awe as he sent another wave of magic in her direction. The water rippled toward her legs. She tensed.

"Arrain!" Mara writhed against her bonds. He touched her magically between her legs. Invisible hands caressed her pussy, fingers tickling her drenched seam. New fire burst out within her. *God*. She shivered from head to toe. With the way he teased her, she didn't know how long she would last before she made a fool of herself. She had to admit he seemed to know her body better than she knew it herself. He knew just the right places, the right pressure to make her toes curl in ecstasy. Her heart beat a wild rhythm as an unseen hand parted her pussy lips. Fevered heat surged through her. Arrain, with his magic, speared fingers into her cunt. *Damn him*. She bit her lip, squirming like a worm baking under the hot sun. It felt so real, as if he were fucking her with his fingers himself. The pressure. The invisible rigidity that ground against the walls of her vagina. Her pussy clasped desperately around his delicious intrusion.

She wanted to curse him, but the ecstasy left her speechless. The more she squirmed, the tighter her bonds became. In the end, the only thing she could do was surrender to his mastery. The invisible fingers in her pussy stroked her harder now that he had hit her special spot. Mara groaned, feeling frustrated. She couldn't stand being teased this way. He had barely stroked her a dozen times, but she already teetered at the edge of climax. She needed to come so badly, it was maddening. Mara muttered a string of nasty curses.

Arrain looked even more excited at seeing her pent-up frustration. His own pumping went ballistic. His wet palm sounded lewd, and his cock looked as if it was ready to burst. Pearly cream leaked from his tip.

Mara's pulse was racing so hard, all she could hear was her pounding heartbeat. Her pleasure rose. Heat surged through her veins. Just when she was about to climax, Arrain stopped. He let go of his cock. The invisible teasing fingers in her pussy vanished.

"Oh come on!" Mara thrashed wildly. "You suck!" Being denied an orgasm was exasperating. If only she could get her hands on him, she'd rip off his pants and ride him to oblivion. And maybe after that, she'd smack him for teasing her like this. She'd read somewhere that nymphs were teasers. She should have guessed the king of nymphs was the biggest teaser of them all.

Arrain looked so deliciously wicked. The thrums in her pussy intensified. She had never been so ready to be fucked in her life. She wanted him, lusted for him so badly that every fiber of her being screamed with manic need. "Please," she croaked. "Touch me."

"You want me, sweet thing?"

"You know damn well I..." Mara swallowed. "Y-yes."

"I thought so." His arrogance made her want to give him an even harder smack, if she ever got her hands on him. Arrain sat straight up on the leaf; his legs plunged into the water. All of a sudden, he dissolved. Literally. The nymph king melted into clear water that made the pool ripple. Mara widened her eyes, thinking

what she saw was only an illusion. When the last droplet hit the surface, the rippling water surged toward her, bearing some unseen phantom to where she'd been chained. Mara startled. Invisible hands caressed her thigh. The rippling water bubbled next to her, forming a fountain that splattered water everywhere. The fountain slowly turned into the solid bulk of Arrain. He stooped over Mara, dripping water all over her while he groped her thigh, then cupped her pussy. He felt her. A delighted purr curled out from his throat. "Wet. Just the way I like it."

What a surprise, considering who he was. Mara rolled her eyes. "Take these off." She yanked at her shackles. "My arms have fallen asleep."

Arrain settled next to her with the grace of a cat. Locks of long hair partially shielded his face as he raked his gaze over her naked body. His jade eyes glowed with unmistakable hunger. Her heart started to accelerate again. This man was the sexiest thing that had ever walked on two feet.

He granted her wish. Mara saw him gesture with the tips of his fingers, and her shackles vanished in an instant. She rubbed her wrists; then she couldn't help smacking him in the head. He snatched her hand with ease and held both of her arms still. She cringed. Damn, was he strong. No matter how hard she tried to free herself, his grip didn't even budge. Arrain was clearly enjoying her defiance. He let one of her arms go to grab her waist, and suddenly, Mara found herself under him. Her belly hit the surface of the dais, and her legs splayed open for him. Water splashed on her, some getting into her mouth and nose. As she was busy coughing and gasping for breath at the same time, Arrain settled between her thighs. She knew what was going to happen, but it didn't fully register until he'd sheathed himself balls-deep. His long, thick cock plowed her deeply until it hit her cervix. Her scream ripped out of her throat. "Oh fuck!"

"As you wish, my dear," he murmured. Arrain let go of her arm and seized her hips, keeping her still. Mara inhaled a lungful of air. She clawed the surface of the stone dais. He had fucked her many times last night, and she still wasn't used to his thickness. His cock throbbed in her depths, hard, unsated, and stretching her



beyond full. He stilled, trying not to move, as if he wanted to savor the way their bodies became one. Her pussy clenched and creamed. Pure fire burned her, salaciously good and addictive.

Arrain groped along the curve of her back and around her front. He found her breasts. He tightened his hands while his fingers pinched and rolled her nipples. Mara panted again. The deep-drawing sensation burst out, lulling her into a deeper pleasure. He seemed to have a knack for finding a way to make her body respond to his mastery.

He rolled his fingers, and a new spark of ecstasy exploded in her depths. He tugged his cock out and slammed it back in, using the same friskiness as he played with her nipples. Mara clawed the stone harder, water ebbing around her palms. Her body quaked and her brain was overtaxed with too many sinful sensations. He fucked her with short, sly jabs, grinding his granite-hard shaft around the tight walls of her vagina. Arrain withdrew and rammed so hard, her breath was cut off. He released her nipples. Arrain yanked her body upward, pulling her against his chest. Mara threw her head backward, flailing her arms before she got ahold of him. She grabbed a fistful of his hair and held on.

Arrain gave her breast a hard squeeze before he snaked his hand onto her pussy and tugged her clit with his thumb and forefinger. A new kind of pleasure burst within her, making her body quiver and her cunt even wetter. He picked up his pace, ramming her with short, urgent strokes. Her heart pounded as fast as he fucked her. Pleasure rapidly gathered, and when he rolled and pinched her clit hard, the jolt of pure pleasure sent her reeling off the edge. She climaxed so hard she saw fireworks. She thrashed. Her pussy clenched and milked his ever-ravaging shaft. He stopped when she begged him to. She couldn't take this much pleasure.

Mara collapsed after the tide of ecstasy ebbed away. She trembled. Her pulse pounded. Sweat drenched her. Every nerve ending shuddered with lingering sinful sensation. "Oh my God," she whispered. She couldn't believe she had just let herself be fucked in public. And she'd liked it too. Several nymphs applauded her climax.

She felt embarrassed beyond anything. People didn't praise perverts back on Earth. In some parts of the world, she might even be stoned to death for engaging in such licentious behavior.

Arrain kissed the shell of her ear and whispered, "Be mine, Mara Jones, and make my life whole. I know I ask a lot from you, but if you were mine, I'd promise to love you until the end of time. I'm tired of being alone. I'm sick of it."

*That makes two of us. But how can he be lonely when he can have practically any nymph he wants? The guy's a freaking king.*

"Please? Stay and be mine."

Mara found herself nodding before she could think further. Well, it was hard to think straight with a man's cock inside her after an explosive, mind-bending orgasm. Hell, if someone had asked for her firstborn while she was in that condition, she'd have given them hers in a heartbeat.

Arrain's eyes shone. "You just made me the happiest man alive, sweet thing."

*You mean the happiest nymph alive,* she wanted to correct him, but her mind drifted to Neverland when he kissed her hard and fucked her without a care in the world. Again. The festivities continued.

\* \* \*

Mara lay in bed after waking up with a startle. She'd dozed off after a hot bath, feeling utterly exhausted and sore. But it was a happy kind of sore. She'd had more sex in the day and a night she'd spent with Arrain than she'd had in a lifetime. Not that she was going to complain about it, because being with him was wonderful. Arrain was as perfect a lover as any woman could possibly want.

Except...

She blinked. She furrowed her brow when she realized something just didn't add up. Even though they had shared intimate moments, she still didn't know much about Arrain other than he was a king, as lonesome as she was, and had been single

for a long time. He'd said he preferred human women to nymphs. Fetish? Obsession? Call it a woman's instinct, but her gut told her there was more to it.

Mara thought about the split-second decision she had made to become his wife. His queen. She thought about how big the commitment she had agreed to actually was. She would never see her home again. Or her friends. But still. She must let everything go she knew and held dear if she became Arrain's queen.

The man she barely knew.

*Am I ready for this kind of commitment?* Mara pushed off the sheet and dangled her legs over the side of the bed. Her feet touched the cold floor. The chill seeped through her pores, but she didn't mind. It gave her clarity to think.

*But he promised to love me forever. Will that be enough?*

No man had ever promised her that, ever, not even Ben. *Do I dare to take a leap of faith and accept what Arrain has offered?* Mara had never been as confused in her life as she was now.

The doors opened, and Arrain padded in with a big smile in his face. Mara's heart sank to her gut. She didn't think she had the guts to tell him that she was having second thoughts. He looked so happy. Joyous.

"You're awake. Perfect timing." He kissed her on the lips and sat next to her. "The elders asked me when I want to take you as my wife, and I was thinking tonight would be perfect."

Mara felt like she'd swallowed a lump of coal. "Tonight?"

"My men are preparing the hall, and the servants are busy with the banquet. We could wed tonight."

"T-tonight?" She echoed it again like an idiot. "I..."

Arrain's smile vanished. "What's the matter?"

"Don't you think it's too soon?"

"Nay," he replied firmly. "Something on your mind, sweet thing?"

She racked her mind, thinking of a good excuse that wouldn't hurt his feelings. "I...just realized I still don't know much about you."

He took her hand and squeezed it. "Then ask me."

Mara let out a weak laugh. "For a start, how old are you?"

His lush eyebrows knit. "Two hundred and seventy in human years."

*Holy shit.* "Are you immortal?"

Arrain shook his head. "We nymphs have a longer life span than humans, but we aren't immortal."

"I won't live that long." She frowned. "In case you haven't noticed, I'm not a spring chicken. In thirty years, you'll probably still look like you do right now, and I'll look like somebody's grandma."

"Why would you worry about such petty things? Once you're my wife, you'll be granted a long life span as well. You have nothing to worry about."

"Can I still go back home once in a while?"

"Myria would be your new home, sweet thing."

"That means I'd be stuck here."

"Mara." He caressed her cheek lovingly. "I know I'm asking a lot from you. But rest assured that I won't take you for granted. I will cherish you forever."

The invisible lump in her throat became harder to swallow. "Why me, Arrain? Why did you choose me?"

"I've told you before, I desired a special woman."

"I know, you don't like nymphs. But were you always like this? You're more than two hundred years old. Don't tell me you've never dated your own kind before."

His face darkened in an instant.

"Arrain? Is there something you're not telling me?"

It took a while before he finally answered. "I...once...had a queen."

"You were married before? Then what happened?"

“She passed away, and my heir as well.”

Mara brought her hands to cover her mouth. “I’m sorry. I didn’t know.” She wanted to end the discussion, but her curiosity nagged at the back of her head like a persistent cat. “Was she human?”

“Callista was a nymph princess.”

“Oh.” The next word shot out from her mouth before she fully realized it. “How did they die?”

He croaked his answer as if it was painful for him to bear. “Illness. The sin of my father. I was cursed.”

“What curse?”

Arrain rose from the bed and paced. In a low voice, he told her everything. From his father breaking the law and the geis being invoked, to his decision to seek the Weaver’s help. When he finished his story, Mara felt numb. Cold anger surged through her. She could understand his desperation to have a wife and heir for the sake of his kingdom. But she felt cheated that Arrain hadn’t shared earlier the important information that his wife and son died because of a family curse.

It wasn’t Arrain’s fault, but sweet Jesus Christ! “Why didn’t you tell me this before?”

“Forgive me. I sh—”

“Can you guarantee I won’t end up like Callista?”

He went silent. “The Weaver said it it’s not likely to happen, since you’re not a nymph.”

She jumped from the bed, her voice grating. “But can you guarantee I won’t end up dead?”

Arrain took a deep breath. “Regretfully, I cannot.”

Her body turned cold all of a sudden. She collapsed onto the floor. “Then that’s it. I can’t marry you, Arrain. You have to send me home.”

Arrain knelt before her and touched her arm. “Mara, I...”

“I might not live as long as you, Arrain, but I don’t want to end up dead in a year or two. Please understand.”

He closed his eyes. The exuberant light in his face vanished, replaced by a mask of a tortured man. She didn’t like to make him miserable—after all, he had given her nothing but love and pleasure—but the fact he couldn’t guarantee she wouldn’t meet the same fate as his late wife and son freaked the hell out of her.

“Arrain?”

He opened his eyes. *God*. She hated to see him suffer like that. But what choice did she have? “Please send me home.”

## Chapter Five

Unlike her abrupt arrival to Myria, Arrain had sent her home fully clothed. She woke up in her own bed, thinking it all had been a dream, until she saw the skimpy yelu she was wearing. She climbed out of her bed and dragged herself around the apartment. Everything looked the way she had left it. Except for her houseplants. They had withered and died. Just like a part of her. Emptiness shrouded her when she realized she wouldn't see Arrain ever again.

She found out she had been gone for a week. Her boss and her coworkers had panicked over her disappearance. They had filed a missing-persons report. Since Mara had no relatives they could contact, they thought something bad had happened. It took her a couple of days to sort everything out, saying she'd gone on a camping retreat on a whim and her phone broke and there'd been no way to let everybody know where she was. They all bought her lies. The dust should have settled, but restlessness overcame her.

As she settled back into her daily routine, she tried to ignore the harrowing loss that ebbed from the pit of her heart. Each time she remembered how disappointed he was, pure guilt gnawed her unmercifully. She remembered how shocked he had been. His eyes had been consumed by pain and grief; they haunted her each time she thought about him. And now, two weeks after she had been magically kidnapped, Mara started regretting her decision to ever come home. She'd never thought her life would be this hollow without Arrain.

This was insane.

At work, she tried to look normal, picking up where she had left off. A few people who were close to her noticed her changes. On a few occasions, they baited

her to open up about her disappearance, and it caused Mara to sink into a deeper lie. Her story about a camping retreat made people even more curious. They'd think she had gone crazy if she told them she'd been kidnapped by a nymph king. So she said she'd had an emotional breakdown and had to go away for a while to sort out her state of mind. It appeared no one really wanted to nitpick a depressed woman. The ironic thing was she hadn't been depressed until she decided to walk out on Arrain.

Mara wondered if she had made the biggest mistake in her life.

\* \* \*

The Weaver sat quietly, taking a sip of her tea, when Arrain entered his parlor. Her eyebrow arched when she saw him coming. She nodded, acknowledging his presence. Even though he was the ruler of his domain, Arrain couldn't help feeling a bit intimidated each time she came to meet him. Beneath her beautiful glamour and graceful countenance, the Weaver emanated raw power that made everybody within her sight restless.

Arrain settled across from her. Hei gave him a curious look and smiled wanly, as if she had guessed what was bothering him.

"I take it you sent her home?"

He clenched his fist, digging his nails into his palm to numb the pain that had tortured him since he was forced to return Mara to the surface world. If the Weaver weren't a powerful witch-sprite, he would have felt inclined to dishonor their agreement. He could only court Mara for a day and a night. If she didn't want to stay, he had to let her go. But Arrain wanted to keep Mara in Myria, whether she liked it or not. He drew in a deep breath. "Yes."

Hei looked bemused. She took another sip of her tea and placed the cup on the table. "I could have sworn she was your perfect match. I guess I was wrong."

"She'd agreed to stay. Until she found out about Callista and Gavin."



“Oh? That is unfortunate indeed, but shouldn’t you have waited to disclose such a delicate matter after the lady officially became your queen?”

Arrain gritted his teeth unconsciously. “She was curious, and I felt compelled to tell her the truth.” The Weaver cast him a dark look. Silence stretched between them until he decided to break the ice. “I need her back. I want you to—”

“Your Highness,” Hei cut him off with a reprimanding tone, “I can’t do such a thing. It is against her free will.”

“Was it not against her free will when you took her from the comfort of her home?”

“Mara wished to meet her mate at that time, and now she has decided she didn’t wish to be yours. It would be wrong if I spirited her back to Myria. Do you really want to hold someone against her wishes, Your Highness?”

He wanted to. The bond he’d felt between them was so strong. Their passion between the sheets. There must be something he could do to win her heart back. “If I could just talk to her, I’m sure I could—”

“Your Highness, you’re fully aware that this is not the way our arrangement works. I could, however, find you another match. There—”

“No!” The tone of his voice made Hei raise an eyebrow, but Arrain was beyond caring. “I desire no one else. You have to bring Mara back to me.”

“Your Highness...”

“If I could see her just one more time, I’m sure I will be able to change her mind. Please, I beg of you, bring her back to me.”

Hei lanced him with a look that could freeze fire. Her voice was curt. “Your Highness, I will not spirit her against her free will.”

His heart sank. Numbness seized him by the throat. He wouldn’t be able to see her anymore. Mara Jones. The woman he loved. The bitter realization hit him harder than he’d anticipated. “So. This is it, then. My family line will end with me.”

“Now, Your Highness...”

“Can you not see I’m at the end of my rope, mistress?”

Her gaze softened. Perhaps she could hear the desperation in his voice. And he was desperate. For a moment, a mixed emotion plagued the Weaver’s always-stoic face, as if she was struggling with her decision. “If Mara wants you, then you shall have her, Your Highness. Until then, my hands are tied.”

“And the geis?”

“Do you know humans have a saying, ‘love conquers all’?”

Arrain wasn’t thoroughly convinced.

Hei sighed. “When your father desired an heir from your mother, the pact he made with the Weaver dictated that your father and your mother promise to be true to each other and to keep their love alive. But your parents broke the deal when your mother wanted to return home years after you were born. Can you not see, Your Highness, that when your parents broke the deal, a geis was born? And the price of the geis has to be paid.”

Hei continued. “It is unfortunate you suffered when it claimed your queen and your heir. But I personally think if you believe in the love you have, you might have a chance to break your family’s geis for good.”

So there was hope. If they believed in their love. But she didn’t have faith in it. Arrain gripped the armrests until the faint cracking of his knuckles reeled him back to his bitter reality. Mara was frightened by the knowledge she might end up dead like his first queen. Without being able to see her in the flesh, Arrain felt his chance of getting her back was slim.

*If I could see her one more time...*

Desperation didn’t come close to describing what he felt right now.

## Chapter Six

Mara felt sick. She had never guessed missing someone could make her physically ill. Not only had she lost her appetite in the past few days, she had also lost interest in everything. This morning, she had woken up with nausea and body aches, and a vicious headache hammered her head so much that dragging her body out of bed had been an arduous effort. She barely recognized herself when she caught her reflection in the mirror. She looked a total mess, and her hollow, sunken eyes resembled a dead person's. She felt like one too.

At first, she didn't want to admit what was making her sick, but as the days dragged by, she could no longer deceive herself. She missed Arrain. Wanted him. Needed him badly like a junkie needed crack. She wished she could turn back time and stay in Myria. Her fear had driven her to make the biggest mistake of her life, the decision she dearly regretted. So what if she was doomed to die for being with Arrain? The state she was in now was even worse than death. The numbness. The agony. She didn't think she could take this torment forever.

Crazy as it sounded, she had to find a way to get back to Arrain.

Mara decided to call her boss for sick days. She holed up in her bedroom afterward with a laptop, surfing the Net for the Dangerous Curves Web site. No matter what she did, the phantom site remained a phantom. She tried to send numerous e-mails to Dangerous Curves, which also failed miserably. She even tried to trace the message left on her answering machine—the one from Dangerous Curves's representative the day she'd been kidnapped—but the number wasn't in service. By the end of the day, her desperation had crippled her sanity.

She felt terrified. What was she supposed to do if she couldn't get back to Myria? She couldn't go on living like this anymore.

She just couldn't.

Mara spent the rest of the evening in her bathtub, hoping somehow the Weaver would work her magic and send her back to Arrain's arms. She even dunked her head underwater, peeking at the tub's drain, hoping it would bring her back to Myria. Of course nothing happened. A silly hope she'd had, shattered to pieces.

The next several days, she stayed holed up in her apartment, exhausting every possible way to locate the Dangerous Curves site. Her efforts always ended in vain. She even called Candace to ask if she'd had any luck with the site. The girl said she hadn't. Candace had started to think Dangerous Curves didn't exist. It was nothing but an Internet hoax.

Mara wanted to throw the phone against the wall. *You're wrong, honey. You're so fucking wrong. It does exist, and I met a wonderful man. Only I blew it, and now I can't see him ever again.* She covered her face with her hands and cried in silence. She felt fucking pathetic. After the tears had dried, she sat near the kitchen sink, feeling emotionally and physically exhausted.

She didn't know what else to do.

\* \* \*

The town square was deserted at this hour. Even though the night was beautiful, with a perfect seventy-three-degree temperature, Mara didn't see anybody strolling around. Usually, this place was jam-packed with people drinking, watching street performers, or simply enjoying the beautiful summer nights. But tonight, the place looked like a ghost town.

This suited her fine. She didn't feel like socializing with people anyway. She just needed a walk to clear her head.

Mara shambled to the fountain in the middle of the town square. She had lived in this town for more than a decade, but she had never paid attention to it each time she came here. At a glance, the base of the fountain looked like Arrain's mirrormar. It was carved from marble but looked weathered and worn-out. Her gaze drifted to the plaque at the base. It said it was erected in 1892, the same year the town was incorporated.

It was an old fountain.

Mara sat by the ledge, dipping her hand into the water and making small splashes at the frolicking nymph statues in the middle. Strangely enough, the nymphs resembled the nymphs she'd met. One of them held an amphora. She looked uncannily like Isena, her giggly handmaiden in Myria.

"Where are your sisters, Isena?" Mara voiced her thought out loud.

The stone nymph kept her silence, staring to the sky with a blank expression.

Mara felt ridiculous for talking to an inanimate object. She drew a deep breath but still felt suffocated. The pain wouldn't go away. She didn't know when she would be okay. No matter what she did, she guessed she would never be a whole person like she was before. Something inside her had changed. Broken. And only Arrain was the one who could make her whole again.

She fixed her gaze toward the water, wondering if Arrain could see her from the mirrormar. If he could, she wanted him to know her true feelings. "I'm sorry," she whispered, "I was wrong. I regret ever saying I wanted to go home. I'm so fucking miserable without you. I wish I could undo what I did and be with you. I'm so sorry, Arrain."

All of a sudden, everything became too much for her. She looked away, trying to restrain her tears from spilling. Mara had had enough crying over the last several days. She was tired. So fucking tired.

A spray of water hit the back of her head, followed by another and then another.

*What the...*

*Did the fountain just turn on? At this hour?* She whipped her head to see what was going on. Jets of water sprayed from the end of the nymph's amphora. But that wasn't all. The surface of the water was rising. At an alarming rate. Mara was forced to jump from her seat as the water wet her clothes.

The fountain flooded.

Mara would have retreated to a dry place if she hadn't caught something that stole her whole attention. Water bubbled, whirling. She'd seen frothing water like that when she was in...

*Could it be?*

Her breath caught in her throat. Her heart stopped beating.

The water slowly formed into a shape of a man—a man she'd dearly missed for the past few weeks. The man who drove her insane.

"Arrain?" Mara rubbed her eyes. "Is that you?"

"Mara," he croaked.

His voice was hoarse, but it was Arrain's voice nevertheless. Mara found herself climbing over the edge and stepping into the water. It felt like a dream. She stretched her hand and touched him. It was him. Truly him. Arrain. In flesh and blood. Mara wanted to cry.

Arrain pulled her into his arms and held her tight. Her heart swelled, and her tears threatened to spill. He dripped water all over her, but she didn't care. The chill soothed her in a way she had never imagined. "It's really you. Oh my God. Tell me I'm not dreaming."

"No, you are not."

"Did you hear me? Did you hear what I was saying?"

His eyes bore down on her. "Yes. You wished for me. Therefore, I was able to come to the surface world. I miss you too. If you only knew what I've been through."

"I'm sorry. For everything. Will you forgive me?"

He shook his head. "You did nothing wrong. The fault is solely mine. I should never have kept a secret from you."

"Arrain..." Mara wiped her renegade tears. He looked disheveled, tortured. She had no doubt he was as miserable as she was. Guilt seized her by her throat. He was miserable, and it was her fault. She swallowed hard. "I'm ready...to go home."

He palmed her face, brushing his thumbs over her lips. "Are you sure?"

"Yes. Fucking damn sure."

"You're not afraid of my curse?"

"I don't care."

"But I care."

"Arrain, I can't live like this. I just can't. Please, let me come with you. I'm miserable without you. Whatever happens, I'm happy that I could be with you."

A smile broke out on his handsome face. "Have a little faith in our love, sweet thing." He drew her closer and kissed her.

Mara gasped.

The kiss felt like salvation. She thrust her tongue into his mouth, feeling ravenous from missing him. Arrain kissed her back with the same greed. Mara moaned. New fire surged through her. She needed more of him. Tasting him. Having him in the flesh to make sure what she kissed and touched wasn't just an illusion.

Mara cupped his face and broke the kiss. She ran her hands over his chest, his belly, and his groin. His cock stirred at her first touch. She squeezed him. Half-mad with lust, she unbuckled his belt.

Arrain laughed at her impatience. He wanted to help her with the stubborn buckle, but Mara smacked his hands away. He was hers. She wanted to claim what was meant to be hers herself.

He lifted his palms, surrendering. “Very well, sweet thing. I am at your mercy.”

“Damn right,” she growled. Mara didn’t recognize her voice anymore. Greedy. Wanton. Arrain was only dressed in tight black pants, the same attire as when she saw him for the first time. She knelt and kissed his belly, tracing the ridge of his hard abs with the tip of her tongue. His purr curled out of his throat, rumbling and so sexy. She became frisky. Arrain made some urging murmurs as she yanked down his zipper. Mara kissed his navel and licked down and down. Her lips grazed his dark, wet thatch. His scent lulled her into a deeper arousal. Musky and so male. God, she had missed him so much. He was slippery, and the wet leather pants were hard to take off. After a few tugs, she successfully yanked them down to his calves. His cock sprang free. Hard and mouthwatering. Grinning with triumph, Mara pushed him against the nymph statue. His breath hitched when she took his erection with both hands and squeezed it. She stroked him. His cock pulsed, and pearly cream blossomed from the opening. Mara couldn’t resist licking it.

Arrain groaned. His body tensed. A burst of ocean flavor flooded her palate. She was surprised to find he tasted too damn good. Creamy and salty. She squeezed the base of his cock and ran her tongue along his enormous tip, swirling around his slit. His groan deepened.

Mara stretched her jaws wide to accommodate his girth. She sucked him, siphoning his cream. Arrain fisted her hair. His hips thrust upward each time she gave him a hard suck. His breathing became labored as he started to pant. His eyes blazed fire. She loved seeing him like this. Mara popped him out of her mouth. She choked the neck of his cock until she heard a sharp exhalation erupt from him.

“Too hard?”

“Goddess, no. I love it.”

“Mm.” Mara lowered her head and bestowed some featherlight kisses on his erection. Starting from his cockhead, then below the ridge, his veined shaft, and down to his balls. She then licked him from balls to tip. He shivered. Ooh, he loved



it. She did it again. A curse accompanied his shiver this time. His fist tightened around her hair.

“You’re wicked, sweet thing. Truly wicked.”

Mara mumbled. She licked him again. And again, until Arrain couldn’t contain his shivers from all of her teasing. He released her hair and cupped her face, anchoring her to stay still. He then angled his hips and eased himself in and out her mouth. Her jaws ached, but she didn’t mind. Arrain looked worried when what he did triggered her gag reflex. He eased out. Mara didn’t want him to. She growled and took him again. She plunged her mouth until his shaft filled it. Taking him like this was incredibly erotic. Especially listening to his pants and murmurs while his cock throbbed. She might look submissive, but the real truth was that she was the one who had complete power over him.

He fucked her mouth and throat in slow, lazy thrusts. Mara loved every bit of it. Arrain pulled out until his cock tip slipped from her mouth. She wanted to swallow him again, but he didn’t allow her to. “My turn,” he rasped. His voice sounded guttural, rough, and primal like an unsated beast. He seized her hips and forced her to stand up. He kicked off his boots and pants. They made splashing noises in the shallow water. Arrain undressed her with impatience. Her coat flew and landed on the grass. He tore off her shirt and skirt next. Mara trembled when he ran his hands all over her.

Arrain found her lips and kissed her hard. He unhooked her bra. Mara moaned when he pulled it down. Her breasts spilled free. Arrain bit her lower lip and then licked her chest. A thick surge of fire incinerated her whole when he sucked her nipple ravenously. Her body jerked. She writhed, and Arrain deepened his suck. He wrenched off the remaining garment on her body. The panties tore. He bit her nipple. She yelped. Arrain released her sore bud, breathing on her skin. “Bend over.”

Pleasure overtaxed her neurons, and it took her several seconds to process his order. Mara turned around and planted both hands on the concrete ledge of the

fountain. Arrain praised her submission and spread her legs apart with his knee. He cupped her pussy. She whimpered. He parted her wet lips and slid a finger into her cunt. Morsels of pleasure exploded in her depths. Her cunt contracted around his intruding finger.

“Goddess, Mara. Did you miss me?”

She sighed a yes.

He grunted in satisfaction. Arrain slipped in a second finger and fucked her with a rapid motion. New fire rose, searing her alive. She clawed the concrete ledge. Arrain quickened his strokes. Mara shut her eyes. The sensation was unbelievable. Each of his strokes ground the tight walls of her cunt, singeing her nerve endings. Arrain knew how to touch her in the right places. His kiss was hypnotic. His touch was mind-shattering.

Mara grew wetter with the way he finger-fucked her. Arrain mumbled something and curved his finger downward, hitting her special spot. She couldn’t help but scream. A blinding orgasm ambushed her. Her body tensed as thick, unadulterated pleasure consumed her whole. Her pussy clasped around his fingers. Her body shook violently.

“Ah,” he rasped in satisfaction. “Do you want more?”

She whimpered. Her orgasm had barely passed. But hell yeah, she wanted more. “Yes.”

He pulled out his fingers. His cockhead brushed her swollen pussy lips. He didn’t penetrate her right away. He teased her, sliding his hard erection along her vulva. Mara hissed through her teeth as she felt Arrain position his tip at her entrance. Her heart beat wildly. Her breathing halted, frozen in anticipation.

He thrust inside her in one long, forceful stroke, sweeping her mind to oblivion. Her eyes snapped open; her scream erupted. His cock speared her open. He plowed her balls-deep and stilled. His cock juddered in her depths.

“I miss you,” he whispered. “I miss having you like this.”

She did too.

Arrain pulled out in one agonizing, slow tug until his huge cockhead almost left her opening, and eased back in just as slow. She marveled at the sensation. The grind. The way his hard, veined shaft grazed her inner passage. He did it over and over, as if they had all the time in the world. Nothing else mattered at the moment. Just them. The way they loved each other. He let out a low growl that was too feral to be human. "Brace yourself," he warned. "I can't hold this anymore."

Mara gasped and gripped the ledge. Arrain slammed and pulled faster. Harder. Rougher, until their flesh made obscene sounds. He grabbed her hips and pounded her with a sheer savagery, raining her with slam after slam of battering fucks, branding her with his lust. Her head swam. Her chest constricted. The maddening need gathered. He gyrated and pummeled, flooding her with short, rapid, plundering strokes until she felt the air around her thinning. "Arrain..." She keened.

He dug his fingers into her flesh, pistoning even faster. What he did absolutely blew her mind. Silk ribbons of pleasure dragged her higher, to the ultimate completion. He rammed once, twice. Mara exploded. A pure rapture swept her whole. Fireworks burst before her eyes. Her ears rang. Her heart hammered in her throat.

She soared free.

Arrain didn't stop. He kept ramming her with short, savage fucks until another climax ambushed her. Her throat felt raw. A harsh male cry split the air. He came with her this time. Mara sobbed as her cunt clenched his shaft. She could feel him spurting in her depths, spasming, emptying his cum into her.

She felt wrecked after the last tide of ecstasy ebbed away. Mara slumped into the water, but Arrain caught her. He held her still and locked her deep in a lover's embrace. It was heaven.

Mara noticed their surroundings. Arrain's power had sent water everywhere. The fountain sprayed water constantly, and the town square was flooded. Wet, wet,

wet. The sound of footsteps against the puddle caught her attention. Her gaze darted to the source of the noise. She saw a police officer gape upon seeing what had happened.

The officer's face contorted in irritation when he finally saw the two of them in the middle of the fountain. He brandished his baton. "Hey! You! Do you know what you're doing is illegal?"

Illegal? Oh, he meant fucking in public. Duh.

Mara looked up and squeezed Arrain's arm. "I'm ready. Let's go home."

"You sure?"

"Hell yeah."

Arrain laughed and tightened his arms. A sudden force yanked her down, and a heartbeat later, she was underwater. Mara didn't panic like before. In fact, she had never been this calm in her life. She knew she'd be safe, and nothing but happiness would greet her once she arrived in her new home.

This time it was for good.

Myria.

THE END

## Loose Id Titles by Lizzie Lynn Lee

*Original Sin*  
*Wet*

## Lizzie Lynn Lee

Lizzie Lynn Lee was a guitarist, receptionist, executive assistant, tarot reader, boutique owner, and graphic artist before she discovered that writing is her dream job. The advantage is that she can do it in her pajamas and socks. She's an incurable chatterbox, heavy metal aficionado, bookworm, digital enthusiast, and a night owl since most of her stories were done in the wee hours of the morning because of her caffeine-induced insomnia. These days she still plays her guitar whenever she gets bored staring at her computer's screen or plotting the most elaborate scheme of world domination. Fortunately, she has a chronically short attention span.