



Morogh

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Chapter 1

Lying naked and flat on her back with wrists and ankles bound, Summer shivered on the cold stone floor, bathed in shadow, marinating in a pool of blood. The thick red liquid drizzled from all edges of the stone altar behind her. It coated her skin and matted her blonde hair, which clung in sticky tendrils to her neck and back. It even soaked into her gag until not only did the cloying metallic smell of it dominate her senses, but the coppery taste attacked her tongue. She gagged, but there was nothing left in her stomach to vomit up.

Was it a basement, or was it a dungeon? She didn't know. She couldn't tell. Everything was so dark. The only light came from the small flickering flames of two matched candles, and the sullen glow of the coals in the wizard's brazier. He had prepared his pentacle carefully, drawing it in chalk upon the floor to encompass both Summer and the altar, which had been ritualistically bathed in the blood of two sacrificed dogs.

Soon to be bathed in her own.

Don't think about it, Summer told herself, fighting to stave off panic. Don't freak out. Just get loose and get away.

She gasped through the bloody gag, which was tied so tightly around her head that it had cut into the corners of her lips, and worked her arms back and forth in yet another attempt to loosen the ropes that bound her wrist-to-wrist and ankle-to-ankle. Every muscle in her body strained as she tried to slide one hand out from under the binds. Her wrists were bloody and chafed from over an hour of struggling, and yet the knots still held tight. The wizard had tied them very well.

Beyond the altar, a shadowy figure slowly stood up. As his upper torso came into view, Summer froze. Her breaths quickened fearfully when the wizard turned around to look at her. Having just finished painting the last ward of protection along the inside of his consecrated pentacle, he set the cup of dogs' blood aside. He was now ready to begin.

Summer whimpered fearfully. This wasn't happening! How could this be happening? This was the twenty-first century, not the dark-ages! For crying out loud, this was Eugene, Oregon: home to Nazi tree-huggers, well-meaning animal rights activists, and the annual hemp festival. Whoever heard of human sacrifices in Eugene? Los Angeles,

maybe. New York? Well, okay, but not Eugene!

Wake up, Summer begged herself. *Oh please, wake up!*

The wizard came around the altar. A lanky man, he was completely nude and so thin that he seemed to be little more than thin skin stretched over a bony frame. His head was shaven bald, and his huge, sunken, shadowy eyes dominated a face that was drawn and narrow. When he squatted down beside her, content for a time just to watch her, Summer shivered violently.

He was going to kill her now. She could see it in the way his cold, pitiless eyes bored into hers. And caught in the vast emptiness of that gaze, for the span of a heartbeat, Summer forgot how to breathe.

Then the wizard opened his mouth and began to chant, the words low and monotonous and in a language she couldn't recognize, and she came sharply back to herself. But it wasn't until his hands reached down to touch her that Summer sucked a terrified breath through the filthy gag. She screamed, horrified, high-pitched shrieks that were muffled to practically nothing by the cloth across her mouth.

His bony arms slid under her shoulders and her knees, and despite his emaciated gauntness, he picked her up as though she were weightless. He carried her to the bloody altar and lay her down between the still warm corpses of the slaughtered dogs. And all she could do was scream.

The wizard tied her hands to a metal ring fixed in the stone slab above her head. While Summer hysterically sobbed the same muffled and useless 'no' over and over again, he selected a small silver goblet from an assortment of vials and bottles that rested on a narrow table at his right. Cupping it between the palms of his hands, he held it over her.

Closing his eyes as if in prayer, he lifted his face ceiling ward, chanting on without vocal inflection, continuously droning those ominously foreign words until they sounded almost soothing to her ear. He tipped the goblet, pouring a small amount of oil onto her stomach.

Summer froze when he touched her again, groaning as--gently, like the most attentive of lovers--the wizard massaged the oil into her skin, covering every inch of her: her scalp, eyelids and ears, even taking pains to work the oil between her fingers all the way down to her toes.

Then he picked up a long knife.

She didn't want to die! Her green eyes as wide as saucers, she heaved at her bound hands, fighting with renewed desperation to break free.

The ropes cut into her wrists, abrading her already chafed skin and sending thin rivulets

of blood coursing down her arms to her elbows. But though her bonds held fast against the metal ring, she suddenly felt one thumb pop. Pain shot through her arm as the digit was squeezed in unnaturally close to her palm and her oiled right hand slipped beneath the first of the looped coils. Tears poured from her eyes, but Summer back bit her cries and pulled again.

Without breaking his chant, barely pausing even to draw breath between words, the wizard turned to stick the blade of that long knife into the brazier. With his eyes closed, he again caressed her naked body, stroking her breasts, the concave plane of her belly, her rounding hips. He dipped one hand between her tied legs, invading her body with two fingers as though he found it reassuring to touch the proof of her virginity yet again.

Beyond the barrier of the wizard's pentacle, thin wisps of smoke began to spill from the shadows, coiling and rolling across the floor, rising like tentacles in the air all throughout the darkened room.

Sobbing, tears of agony and fear slicing through the blood that stained her face, Summer yanked at her imprisoned arms and her right hand slipped almost completely free. There was only one loop left to evade, and she took a deep breath. Her dislocated thumb sent excruciating shocks all the way up to her shoulder as she threw her whole body into pulling.

Leaning toward the narrow table, the wizard picked up a second knife. This one was black, the blade already stained with the blood of the animals she lay between.

She sobbed when he passed it over her body, and his chanting dropped in volume to barely more than a whisper. Closing her eyes to shut out the sight of that knife, she heaved against the rope. Sweat beaded her face; her muscles tightened and her back arched. She bit into the gag to keep from screaming as the base of her thumb began to squeeze through the last rope loop.

Blood flowed steadily from her wounded wrists, wetting the ropes and dripping onto the altar. She was only halfway out when the tip of the black knife found the hollow of her throat and pressed in there. Summer froze, gasping for air, and then dissolving into ragged sobs. She had just lost, and her body sagged until she lay limp against the stone.

A foul, sulphurous stench suddenly belched from the surrounding shadows on a hot and fetid wind, startling Summer and silencing the chanting wizard. With a sound like rocks grinding together, a low voice rumbled, "Stay thy blade, mortal. I accept thine offering."

The wizard opened his eyes. Moving the knife away from Summer's throat, he turned his head, slowly scanning the room beyond the circle. "Who has answered my summoning?"

"Morogh."

The wizard was briefly silent. "Your name is not known to me."

"Ah, but I know thee," the voice grated. "Elliott Blayre, son of Daniel, the son of Curt. Arrogant enough to assume command over we who rule the dark. Thou art well known to my kind."

From the shadows outside the pentacle, something moved, and the words that grated out from the darkness sent a shiver of icy fingers down Summer's spine. "Thy tender morsel tempts me."

Trembling, she turned her head the other way, peeking under her left arm, but she could not see beyond the light of the brazier.

"What dost thou desire?" the gravelly voice inquired.

"Money. Power," the wizard said. "Immortality."

"Ah yes." The creature in the blackness laughed, a low, dry, rock-grinding chuckle of a sound. "Centuries pass, but the request remains always the same."

Summer caught her breath as a shape separated itself from the shadows and stepped out into the illuminating glow of the candles.

The demon looked like any other aide man in his physical prime, huge and muscular, broad across the shoulders and narrow in the hip. His skin and hair were dark, and his pupil-less eyes a solid shade of black. He came right up to the edge of the protective circle, looked at her, and smiled, showing a vicious pair of upper as well as lower fangs.

Careful not to cross the chalk circle, the demon squatted as close to the altar as he could come. Resting his elbows on his knees, he said, "Thou asketh of me a great deal and yet, as tempting as I do find thy morsel, thine offer is disproportionately small."

"She is untried," Elliot said.

"Yes," the demon murmured. "I smell the innocence of her." He closed his eyes, his all too-human face tilting upward as he scented the air. "Her musk is found most pleasing to me. I would enjoy the breeding of her." Lowering his head, he opened his eyes again. "Thou asketh still too much."

The wizard narrowed his eyes and his mouth tightened with annoyance. Turning his back on Summer, he faced the demon fully. "I give her to you, body and soul."

The gag muffled her horrified cry as Summer yanked on her arm again. Once, twice, she gargled an agonized shout as she strained and her right hand suddenly popped through the final loop of rope. Burning, bleeding, the skin pulled back from her bruised wrist, she reached up to untangle her other hand from the now loose coil of rope.

The demon chuckled. "Gladly would I possess her body, but her soul hath no usefulness

for me, nor is it thine to give."

"Then I give you mine," the wizard hissed.

"That black mire hath even less interest and usefulness to me than my pure morsels."

Summer worked feverishly to get the filthy gag out of her mouth. She pressed a bloody hand to her cut lips, rising up onto one elbow as she desperately looked around. She spied the brazier, and the handle of that long knife just barely beyond her reach.

"Then, what?" the wizard demanded. "What do you want?"

Smiling, the demon licked his lips. "My morsel escapes."

Summer's legs were still tied together when the wizard spun back around. Scrambling to get out of his reach, she reached wildly for the hilt of the knife and fell backwards off the altar. Though she hit the floor shoulder first, cracking her head on the uneven stones, her fingers snagged the wrapped handle and, on the way down, she pulled both the knife and the brazier down with her.

"No!" the wizard shouted, grabbing first for her and then for the brazier, which toppled over well beyond his reach. Lumps of coal scattered in a collective spray across the stones, erasing the protective wards they slid across and breaking the sanctity of the pentacle. "You fool!"

Head spinning, Summer rolled away from the burning coals, clutching the handle of the knife, more frightened now than she had ever been in her life. She felt the sizzling touch of a coal against her thigh, and she frantically scraped the knife against the floor, clearing the area around her to keep from being burned again.

The wizard looked almost sick as he spun back around. No longer squatting along the outer rim of the circle, the demon now stood toe-to-toe and eye-to-eye with him.

Dark lips peeled back from fanged teeth as a low, growling laugh rumbled up from deep within the demon's chest. "Boo," he rasped softly.

The wizard screamed when the creature grabbed him by the throat.

So did Summer.

She scuttled backwards, burning her hands and legs on stray coals, trying to cut the ropes around her feet and run at the same time. In full-blown panic, the only thing she managed to do well was burst into tears. But clutching the hilt of that knife to her chest, at the top of her lungs, she sobbed out, "Help me! Somebody, please help me!"

Everything abruptly vanished. The room and the darkness. The altar, ropes, and the

doomed wizard. All of it, suddenly just gone.

Summer found herself standing on a deserted stretch of beach, her bare feet burning in the hot sand. The sun was at full noon high up in the sky above. Palm tree fronds rippled as a calm and cool breeze swept out of the north. Behind her, ocean waves softly lapped at the shore.

She still held the wizard's knife in both hands, her entire body shaking violently. Not two inches from the end of that long and shiny blade, which the brilliant daylight revealed to be decorated on both sides with dozens of engraved runes, stood the demon. Even bigger up close, he towered over her, his black pupil-less eyes gazing down into hers, a slow smile pulling at his mouth and revealing his sharp teeth.

"Boo," he rumbled again, and blew her a kiss

She was a beautiful specimen of human mortality. Long blonde hair, green eyes, pale white skin. She had pouty lips, kissable lips--and a small brown mole just above her right nipple that enticed the eye. She quivered beautifully before him, utterly naked as she threatened him with that useless ceremonial knife, with only a narrow-trimmed swath of dark hair to obscure his view of her mons.

How delicious.

And she was pure, too.

Morogh breathed in the smells of her: the fresh allure of a virginal, untried female, all innocence, naivete and fear. That last scent he was well familiar with, he'd smelled that from many humans in his lifetime, but the first two were uncommon enough to arouse more than just idle curiosity. His groin tightened, beginning to swell, his slow smile widening marginally when her eyes ducked down to look at the impressive masculine attribute standing at stiff attention, as though it too sensed the virginal female before him. She gulped her next breath and her green eyes widened fearfully, snapping back up to his face while both hands tightened around the handle of her knife.

"Dost thou feel safer holding that before thee?" he rumbled gravelly, and tapped the pointed tip of the blade one finger. That she let him touch it at all showed how easily he could have taken it from her. He made no such move, preferring to play with her instead. And when she took a shaky step backwards in the hot sand, he followed, his pace slow and steady and evenly paced with hers.

"G-go a-away," she whispered, and made a shooing motion at him with the blade of the knife. "Just g-go away! Leave me alone!"

Slowly, Morogh lowered himself to squat on his muscular haunches and watched her.

She stared at him, her wide green eyes dismayed. "W-what are you doing?"

"Waiting," he said. He rested his elbows on his knees, folding his hands between them. "Sleep will come to thee eventually. Tis but one of thy kind's many frailties."

She backed up another step, then another, then turned to flee. She accidentally dropped the knife, running no more than a few steps before she had to come back. Though Morogh hadn't moved, she scooped it up again and looked at him, judging the distance still between them as though to make sure.

He licked his sharp teeth, and she took off again, fleeing up the sandy beach line toward the trees and the dense rainforest beyond.

Morogh chuckled, then vanished.

He reappeared in the rainforest, standing ten feet off the ground on the thick trunk of a half-fallen tree. Below him there was a stony wall that began a steep hillside from which a natural spring bubbled up from the rocks, trickling down amongst the ferns and moss to feed into a small forest pond.

This was where Summer came crashing through the underbrush. She tripped on a tree root, almost stabbed herself in the leg with that knife as she fell, she cried out sharply when she caught herself from tumbling in the water with her injured hand.

Tears gushed from her eyes as she crawled on hands and knees into a dense shield of flowers and ferns. Sitting in the dirt with the knife at her side, she hugged her arm close to her body and rocked. Her shoulders shook as she wept, repeatedly swiping at her eyes with the back of her good hand and looking back through the trees the way she'd come.

Above her, Morogh raised his hand. "Thy wounds art healed."

Summer jerked around on her hip. Her mouth fell open when she saw him, then snapped shut and she looked down at her hands again. She would need a bath to wash away all the dried blood and caked-on sand, but the bruises, cuts and abrasions on her wrists and at the corners of her lovely mouth were instantly mended.

So was her thumb, which was no longer swollen or protruding off her palm at that unnatural angle. She moved the digit experimentally, bending the knuckle once. She then raised her eyes back up to his.

"If thou art still in a mood to flee," he said, and gestured toward the east, "the old resort lieth two miles in that direction."

The look in her eyes became slightly less frightened and somewhat more angry.

"Go. Away!" She bit out the words, her voice still trembling, although she herself shook nowhere near as violently as she had on the beach.

She grabbed up the knife and took off running again. To the west, he noted and smiled, shaking his head again. How predictable.

Morogh vanished, reappearing a moment later on the ground just in time for her to dart past him. "Thou doth go the wrong way," he called after her.

"Go back to hell!" she shouted, and ducked into the underbrush.

He smirked and disappeared. This time when he popped back into sight, he made sure to be far enough ahead that she would easily see him before running past. He leaned back against a tree, crossing his legs at the ankles, his arms across his chest, and held out a shirt for her.

Summer stopped when she saw him. Obviously unaccustomed to running, she was breathing heavily and had pressed a hand to her side. She glanced from him to the shirt and back again.

"I'm not that stupid," she finally said. "You give me a shirt and take my soul for all eternity. No, thanks. I think I'll pass."

Morogh snorted. "What use have I for mortal souls? Tis thy kind, thine holy men, that make such claims to frighten the weak-minded into subservience."

"You're just going to give it to me?" she asked. "Out of the goodness of your heart, I suppose."

"Dost thou prefer to run about unclothed?"

"Why only a shirt?"

He smiled, his black eyes unblinking. "I prefer thee unclothed. But it doth occur, perhaps such is not the way to win thee to me. And I would have thee, Summer." He took a step closer, his grating tone softening intimately like a lover's. "I would know thee. Thy taste, the touch of thine hands upon me, the soft, wet feel of thee as my sword doth sink into thy tight, young scabbard. I would hear thy breathy sighs as thee beggeth me quicken my strokes, the pleasure within thee a torment beyond thy bearing."

She backed up a step, swallowed and shook her head. "Keep the shirt."

But when she turned, he abruptly appeared to block her escape.

"Have I caused harm to thee?"

"What happened to the wizard?" she countered, her breaths still uneven, though now due more to her unease of him than to any earlier exertion.

"Ah," Morogh said. "But he annoyed me, and thou hast not." His mouth twitched with amusement. "Yet."

Summer backed up a step, but he was no longer in front of her, appearing instead so close behind that she bumped into the hard breadth of his chest. His arms came up around her, twining about her waist and cradling her close.

"Stayeth thee with me," he rumbled against her ear. "This constant bouncing amongst the trees wearies me."

She sliced his forearm with the knife and tried to run, but Morogh did not let her go. Instead, he merely raised his arm to look at the cut. Though deep, only a trickle of thick black blood began to ooze from the wound.

"Well done, little morsel," he commented mildly. "Thou art a fighter. I like that."

And before both their eyes, within a matter of seconds, his skin began to close and the wound disappeared. The only sign of it to remain was the drop of black blood still drying against his dark flesh.

Summer let the useless knife slip from her fingers. It fell point down into the ground at their feet.

"Is it now my turn to cut thee?" He wrapped both arms around her waist again, bending his head to kiss the side of her neck. His lips parted and he sucked, tasting her skin and the flavor of her fear. He felt her trembling in his embrace and heard the tiny hitches of her breath catching in her throat. Very gently, he bit, letting her feel his teeth before soothing the spot with another lingering kiss. "As a bee drinkest the nectar of the flowers, so contented could I be suckling the blood from thy veins."

She turned her head away. Shivering as she whispered, "What do you want?"

"Thou art not that stupid, remember?" He caught her thighs, holding them steady and slightly parted. The tips of his long nails were within inches of grazing her sex, but he resisted the temptation to touch her there. At least not physically. He kissed the shell of her ear as he thought of parting those soft nether lips and holding them open to reveal her warm, pink sex to him.

Summer caught her breath. She looked down. "What--what are you doing?"

He could all but see that tiny bud, the center of her pleasure, like the pistil of an unfurled flower, hiding within the folds of sensitive flesh. He would touch her there gently at first-

-
Summer gasped sharply. "Oh!"

--stroke her with his fingers to part the folds and bare that hidden nub to his kiss.

"O-oo-Oh!" Her knees almost buckled and her head fell back against his chest. Summer latched onto his forearms with both hands. "W-wait! Stop!"

He would flick it with his tongue until her clit began to swell under the constant stimulation, coming slowly out of hiding to be licked—

"Ohmigod!" Her back arched even as she tried to thrust her hips back away from the mouth she couldn't see. Her luscious bottom bumped right up against his prominent groin.

--laved and rolled by his tongue—

Horror battled intense pleasure for dominance over her face. Eyes squeezed tightly closed, she moaned hoarsely and her head fell forward on her shoulders. She panted.

--drawn into his mouth and suckled like a piece of round candy, tongued relentlessly over and over and over—

"Oh God!" She cried, her whole body drawing taut. Her stomach tightened, the muscles clenching down as her hips jerked. She flung her head back against his chest, her nails raking his shoulders as she grabbed onto them as though for dear life.

But just as she toppled on the verge of coming, Morogh let her go.

Summer collapsed to her knees at his feet. She folded over completely, her forehead almost touching the ground as she cupped her aching sex with a protective hand. For a long time she lay there, breathing hard, her muscles clenching and shivering, her body still working to attain the orgasm he had so abruptly denied her.

Finally, with one hand braced against the ground, she crawled up onto her knees. When she raised her head to look at him, fury flashed in her eyes. "Don't," she hissed, "you ever do that to me again!"

Morogh squatted, bringing himself down to eye level with her. Slowly, he reached beneath her body to take hold of her arm and the hand that still cupped her sex was gently pried away. She barely resisted, tugging back on her arm only feebly before she gave in to his overwhelming persistence.

Her fingers glistened with the liquid proof of her body's arousal. Bringing her hand to his face, he breathed in the salty-sweet musk of her, then tasted it. "Mm," he rumbled. "The day cometh when thee shalt cry out to me, 'Aye' and 'Do thus again' and 'More'."

"Don't bet on it," Summer told him.

But her voice trembled, thoroughly lacking conviction, and Morogh merely smiled, tasted her fingers one last time, before letting go of her hand.

* * * * *

"What happened here?"

"Thy kind calls them tropical cyclones," Morogh said. "The location of this human frolic was poorly chosen. Reef barriers restricted the boats from approaching the beach, sharks allowed no safe bathing in the water, and the island lieth far from the main shore. Thus the venture did defy profitability and so, when destroyed, was not rebuilt."

Standing on what might once have been a well-maintained path, but which the surrounding rainforest had begun to reclaim, Summer stared down the short hillside at the scattered remains of the resort. A group of small monkeys had scattered from the resort when she'd first crested the top of the hill and, after years of being subjected to the whims of free-range animals, she dreaded what she would find when she went inside.

Unfortunately, she didn't have a whole lot of choices.

Having spent the last few hours wandering around, Summer had come to the realization that the hilly rainforest and its surrounding beach was really a tropical island, and not a very big one at that. What was worse, not only did they seem to be the only two people currently on it, but also the only two people to have been here in quite some time. The paths were all vastly overgrown and there were no signs of recent human habitation anywhere that she could see.

The resort itself was little more than a main office with six or seven individual cottages scattered throughout the immediate undergrowth. All but one were roofless. Two of the cottages lacked walls all together, and here and there, sticking out from the flowers and the brush were what looked like the decaying remains of dressers, tables and chairs left too long out-of-doors. There was a build up of bowerbird nests along the surviving eaves, and vines embraced the buildings as though the forest sought to pull the structures down into it.

The Ritz, it wasn't.

It wasn't even the Motel Six, for that matter.

"I thought you said the resort was in the other direction," Summer said.

"Honesty is what thou thinkest when thou thinkest of my kind?" Morogh asked.

She had given up on telling him to go away; he wasn't listening to her anyway. Then she had tried for a brief time to ignore him, but that hadn't worked either. And frankly, if the truth be known, while demons hardly topped her list of companions to have while trapped on a deserted island, Morogh still beat being alone, which was something Summer had never been very good at.

"Where are we?"

"Mortal man hath named this Kendermic Island."

She frowned. "I've never heard of it."

"Hast thou heard of Australia?"

"You took me to a deserted island somewhere off Australia?" She looked stunned.

"You're lying, right? Please tell me you're lying!"

He gave her that maddeningly slow smile that showed the points of his fangs and lied, "I would never lie to thee."

In disbelief, Summer snapped, "You couldn't take me to the Eugene police station? You had to take me halfway around the world to Australia?"

"Wouldst thou have run to me in the station of the Eugene police?" Morogh inquired, painstakingly polite, his black eyes glittering knowingly.

"I'll never run to you." Summer turned on her heel and stormed down the small hillside. She tugged at the back of the shirt he'd given her, wishing it were long enough to cover her completely. It made her very uncomfortable knowing he was behind her. She could feel his eyes following as she headed toward the resort. Particularly, they followed the sway of her bottom as she walked. She could all but hear the smirk turning up the corners of his demonic mouth.

"Oh, but thee will." He fell into step behind her.

"Don't hold your breath!" she snapped, but recanted only minutes later when she walked up the porch steps to the main office, pushed open the door and startled the hundreds of giant bats roosting therein.

They all shrieked and vigorously boxed and flapped their wings at her.

Summer screamed and fell backwards off the porch, grabbing Morogh's arm and shoving him ahead of her. "Oh my God!"

"Thou art in no danger from these beasts. They feed on naught but fruit," Morogh said. The bats flapped and squawked, now objecting as much to each other as to having been disturbed in the first place.

"Oh my God," Summer said again, peeking out at them from behind the demon's back. "Can't you control your minions?"

"I have already told thee, morsel. I care not for the command of mortal flesh...apart from thine, of course." He looked back at her over his shoulder, black eyes glittering with

amusement. "Calm thyself, they are but fruit feeders and will do thee no harm."

"How do you know they're not vampire bats? Look at those teeth!"

Morogh began to chuckle, and then to laugh in his deep, gravelly baritone.

Summer looked from him to the bats, then back again. "Don't you laugh at me," she warned him.

"If thou trusts nothing else from my lips, then know as truth that these beasts shall do thee no harm." Morogh listened to the indignant chaos of the bats for a moment, then laughed again. "Be grateful thou hath not the ability to understand these creatures. They have nothing kind to say to thee."

Summer backed up when Morogh shut the main office door and came back down off the porch.

"Fruit bats," he said again.

"Well, how should I know that?" she shouted angrily, her frustration exploding into temper. "I don't know bats! I didn't ask to come here! Why did you bring me here? Why the hell are *you* still here? Why don't you just go away and leave me the hell alone!"

Morogh watched her turn on her heel and stomp off toward one of the other buildings. "I have forgotten the chase involved in wooing. Little morsel, I am intrigued by thee."

"Wooing?" She backed up a step, angrily shaking her head. "Just stay away from me."

"For the willing touch of thy body beneath mine, I would give unto thee thine heart's desire," he called after her.

She snapped around and marched back up to him. "My heart's desire?" she echoed, her voice warbling with the effort needed to sound calm, her green eyes crackling with frustration and anger.

"Thou hast but to ask," he said. "Anything thou doth want for, only speak it unto me, and I shall thee provide."

Her lips thinned. "How about someone who doesn't speaketh in a forketh tongueth?"

She turned and stalked away stiff-leggedly. Shaking her head irritably, she headed for one of the other buildings.

She only made it a few feet before, squatting down in a very sudden and frog-like motion, Morogh shot his tongue out to snap her right buttock where the fleshy base peeked out beneath the hem of the shirt he'd given her.

With a cry, Summer faced him, her jaw dropping in shock, at first not sure what he'd done, for he looked entirely normal again. She quickly covered the spot where her buttock was stinging, and Morogh shot his tongue out again, this time tagging her between her legs and catching her clitoris straight on. With a shout of surprise, her eyes widened and she quickly clamped a hand over her sex as his tongue once more retreated back into his mouth.

Morogh smiled. "My forked tongue doth have its uses."

He flicked it at her as a snake might when tasting the air, and Summer lost hold of her anger as she felt the motion of that tongue slither right up between her fingers and vaginal lips to tickle the sensitive nub nestled therein. Her legs nearly buckled, but the sensation of being so manipulated disappeared the instant his tongue withdrew from sight and Morogh closed his mouth.

"Thou art not enamored of the pleasures my tongue offers thee?" His laughing black eyes held her gaze knowingly. "In this I would prove most malleable to thy command. From thee, I am curiously reluctant to take what is not offered freely...but offer of thyself to me and, ah!, but the things I have to teach thee..."

Her face flushed bright red. "That looked disgusting," she said, struggling for primness. "Don't ever do that again."

He laughed as she walked away.

Aside from the fact that one wall was entirely missing and there was no glass in the windows, the cabin in which Summer had chosen to bed down for the night looked practically untouched by the cyclone that had destroyed the rest of the hotel. There were leaves and sticks scattered across the carpet, which had begun to mildew where past rains had fallen inside. Two little, red creatures that looked like crosses between a kangaroo and a rat scampered out through the missing wall when she first entered the room, and she'd had to pick a bug the size of her fist off of the bedspread. But at least there were no bats and the bed was dry. Sometimes sacrificial virgins just had to take what they got.

It had taken some time for her to fall asleep, but hours later after night had fallen and the moon had risen full and bright, the only eyes still open were Morogh's.

Summer lay on her back, her arms flung out above her head, restlessly tossing and turning with eyes squeezed shut. She arched her back and clutched at the pillow that no longer cushioned her head with both fists. A guttural moan of absolute ecstasy tore itself from her throat. And like a vulture perched at the foot of her bed, Morogh squatted with perfect balance on the thin foot rail, as black as the shadows cast by the pale light of the full moon, watching her, his unwavering obsidian gaze drinking in her torments.

The scent of her filled the room. It was all over the bed, permeating the thin dusty sheets and teasing his nostrils with every breath. His mouth watered. His loins ached. The angst

of this kind of deprivation was an unbearable new experience for him; he'd never had to deny himself before. He wasn't sure he liked the sensation and was fairly positive he didn't like the waiting. But her dreams were almost enough to make up for it.

Human dreams were fun. Fertile, imaginative, easily manipulated. One could learn so much about a human from the details in their dreams, and the things he was learning about Summer were as fascinating as they were arousing.

Summer desired to be spanked. That was her secret shame. She kept that need locked so tightly deep down inside herself that he almost missed it when he first insinuated himself inside her nighttime wanderings. It wasn't until she moved into his arms, tucking herself so sweetly into his embrace, and whispered, "Please spank me," that he even suspected that kink existed within her. And he liked kinks. He was usually good at detecting them before they ever became that obvious.

"Please," she'd whispered, rubbing her body against his with near feline sensuality. "Please."

Wrapping his arm around her waist and holding her tightly to him, Morogh gave her exactly what she asked for. He spanked her with slow, hard swats, rubbing her bottom for a long time in between blows, tracing her buttocks with the tips of his talons in a way that made her shiver and try to spread her legs wider.

Human dreams were so much fun.

And she liked him in it. That was her second dirty little secret shame. From the second that he made his presence known, it took very little manipulating before she accepted him into her mind, opening intangible limbs to receive him with an enthusiasm unequaled by any other human woman in his long memory. She locked her mouth hungrily on his, kissing him passionately and submitting to his kisses in return. She wrapped her legs around his hips when he lowered her to the floor, grabbed his ass with both hands and pulled him deep inside her, instigating a hard and vigorous pace. And every few thrusts, he jerked her hips up enough to slap her bottom again, just to hear her grunts and squeals.

"More," she begged.

He never would have guessed it of her.

In her bed, Summer rolled fitfully from her back to her stomach, hugging her pillow tightly, one knee drawing up to her chest as she tilted back her hips, humping slowly up and down on the mattress. She was making little whimpering noises way back in her throat. The sound and sight of it went straight to his groin.

In her dream, she rocked on her hands and knees, impaling herself upon him, struggling to take the whole of him inside her willing body and loudly crying out her pleasure when she finally succeeded. Her pretty pink nipples were as hard as little diamonds, her face

was flushed and her bottom positively rosy.

More than a half a dozen times now had she put him in the starring role of making her submissive fantasy come true. By the time the twilight hues of night began to give way to the peaking glow of pre-dawn morning, Morogh had slapped her bottom in a variety of positions. He'd held her across his knee, bent her over his hip and over the edge of her dream bed, and he had quite cheerfully turned her lily-white nether cheeks to a blushing shade of crimson while she kicked and fussed, wailed and cried, and even moaned, panted and thrashed with enjoyment.

Morogh flared his nostrils as, in her slumbering mind, she dropped her head to the mattress and begged again for him to spice her pleasure with the sweetest of pains. She spread her legs and, bent in such a penitent pose, exposing herself to him in the most submissive of postures, begged him without words to touch her. Who was he to resist such a plea? The scent of her musk was so overwhelming, in fact, that he almost came off the foot rail and crawled into bed beside her, fully ready to use her in all the positions her fertile mind was conjuring.

"Please," she whispered in her sleep. Then moaned, "Oh please...Oh please..."

In her dream, as he thrust deep within the tight, wet sheath of her body, he raised his hand to sharply slap her bottom. First one side, then the other, back and forth, over and over again while she pushed back against him. She threw back her head, her tussled blonde hair flying all about her face and shoulders as she screamed a hoarse, drawn-out wail. Her entire body stiffened, and her vaginal muscles locked around him. She shuddered, moaning all the while.

Squatting on the foot rail, Morogh could all but feel her spasming on the length of his cock. It was unbearable, it was exquisite, and it was driving him absolutely mad every time that she moaned, gasping and writhing in her bed like an experienced brothel mistress. The urge to crawl beneath the thin sheet, to slither up the folds and between her legs, to caress her soft thighs, so damp with the dew of her arousal, to bite her still humping bottom and to give her something real to push back upon and ride, was blindingly intense.

"Spank me," she begged.

The corners of his mouth curled upwards. Oh yes, this hands-off existence wasn't going to last for him much longer, but now that he knew what Summer craved, deep down in the secret recesses of her soul, it wouldn't be hard to use those fantasies against her.

* * * * *

Summer woke up sore. Her muscles hurt as though she'd lain tense all night. Particularly, she was sore along the inner slopes of her thighs. Lying on her stomach, as she started to push up onto her knees, she became aware of just how wet the mattress was beneath her.

At first she thought she'd started her period, and then she looked down.

Her mouth fell open. "That son of a bitch!"

"Dost thou profane me, little morsel?"

She fell on her side in her haste to look behind her. Seeing the demon perched like a vulture at the foot of her bed gave her barely a moment's pause. Then she peeled back the sheets and looked down at herself and the mattress again. The front of her shirt was sopping wet. There was so much fluid in fact that, for a moment, she doubted what she was seeing. Maybe she'd wet the bed. But after touching the mattress, a hesitant sniff at her fingertips revealed a scent as far removed from urine as dogs were from cats. And her anger returned.

"You-you-you...son of a--You touched me!" she accused.

"Nay, I did not. Not physically anyway."

"I don't believe you!"

"Faith, I do find it equally difficult to accept, but the fact remains, my lips did not once touch upon thy's. Nor did mine hand wander itself between thine untried thighs. Thy virginity is still in place." A corner of his mouth quirked. "More's the pity."

"Liar!"

"Often," he agreed with a nod. "Truth is not but a last resort for those who lack the imagination to come up with better. Still thy body remains physically unknown to me."

"I don't believe you!"

"We go in circles. Demon though I may be, that does not make me rapist." His talons clicked on the foot rail. "At least not presently."

Throwing back the sheets, Summer scrambled from the bed. She spread her hands, looking down at herself. "What...But...This can't have been all just me."

"Hast thee forgotten thy dreams, that most fertile of playgrounds?" Vanishing from the foot of the bed, he reappeared with a puff of smoke and a slightly sulphurous smell right behind her. His hands caught the front of her thighs, pulling her hips back into the cradle of his own. The slight scrape of his long talons on such sensitive skin was a titillating thrill that went straight through her. "If thou would but permit, my fondest delight doth lie in both the pleasuring and the cleaning of thee."

He licked her, the rasp of his tongue moving horizontally like sandpaper from her nape to her shoulder and, simultaneously--though she knew it was impossible--she also felt that

touch slide vertically up between the swollen and aching lips of her sex to flick at the pulsing nub of her clit.

Summer shuddered, and she didn't resist anywhere near as quickly as she had the night before. It wasn't that his proposal was any less repugnant--or so she told herself--than it had been yesterday, because it wasn't. But when she pulled out of his hands, she had to struggle to mask her arousal with irritation, to pretend that her belly wasn't molten with sexual heat and her body didn't thrum from his intimate touch.

"If you want to help me," she snapped, ripping the sheets off the bed. "Why don't you go find me something to eat."

She stalked outside and headed for the overgrown path back into the rainforest. She didn't have any soap. She wasn't even sure where the fresh water stream was from here, but she had to wash herself. Quickly. Immediately. Before she set up and became--ugh--sticky!

"Mayhaps I should take thee up on thine original offer," Morogh said as he followed her up the hill, away from the hotel.

She kept going. "I've made no offers. I sure as hell haven't made any to you."

"Ah, but thou did." He appeared abruptly to block the path almost directly before her. It didn't stop her. She merely sidestepped around him, ducking her head away as he bent to murmured in her ear, "All night, thou begged of me to take thee upon my knee--"

Summer slowed, coming to a gradual stop at the top of the hill.

"--to bare thy lovely bottom--"

She turned around, staring back at him with wide, wide eyes.

"--and take thee to task for all thy disobedience to date." He smiled, enjoying her sudden discomfort. "To light fire upon thy delectable flanks, thereby taking thee to thy limits with pleasurable discomforts."

He knew. She barely breathed. "I never asked you to do that. How could you possibly know all that?"

"Thou speaketh thy mind aloud while sleeping."

"Liar." She turned and abruptly started walking again, even faster this time.

"Again do we go in circles." He fell into step behind her once more and, as though musing aloud and only to himself, said, "Mayhaps the ache thee desires to suffer needs be more disciplinary than pleasurable. Mayhaps," he said, his smile never shifting, though

his voice did drop to a low growl, "the path to thine heart begins with a smarting, aching bottom."

Summer froze again. It wasn't until her lungs began to ache that she realized she'd stopped breathing entirely.

He moved one step closer to her, inclining his head as he sought to meet her eyes. "Thou loved me as much as thee did love my touch upon thy bottom within thy dreams, evidence of which there is ample liquid proof. Tis a pity thou hath no memory of this. Not that I mind the opportunity to re-educate thee. Tell me, my tender young morsel, wouldst thou prefer to lift thy nightshirt and bare thyself to me, or shall I do thus for you?"

"No," she whispered.

"Aye," he corrected. "Thy bottom shall burn beneath the blows of my chastisement."

"No." Her voice shook, and badly.

"Aye," he rumbled, his voice intimate and low. It caressed her ear with the same feather softness by which his mouth slowly caressed her own, barely brushing her lips, the touch not even enough to be considered a kiss. "The desire to give thee panties just so thee must take them down for me, it is most tempting."

She shook her head, barely, the action not even generating enough movement to pull her lips out of contact with his.

"Aye, and a thousand times so; I am so drawn to thee." His arm snaked around her waist, his hand settling warm against the small of her back, drawing her belly-to-belly with him. "Fear not, my morsel. No need will there be for thee to cry to me more. I will make thee most contented before I have done."

Summer broke his hold and took off running. She fled down the remains of the once neatly manicured path, crashed through the foliage of the rainforest and didn't stop until she tripped over the sprawling ridges of a partially uprooted tree. She fell into a rhododendron bush, pressing both hands between her thighs, willing the ache of her wayward desires to cease their pulsating. But it wasn't her hands that she wanted to feel touching her there.

Side aching, heart racing, she began to laugh. It wasn't funny, but she laughed anyway. Drawing her legs up to her chest, she sat enfolded in the boughs of that bush and laughed until tears poured down her face.

Her shirt and sheets were drip-drying over an assortment of bushes when Morogh popped into existence next to the freshwater pool. He tossed their breakfast down on the moss next to her foot. 'Breakfast' was a grey rhinoceros iguana, very limp, very dead, its

tongue lolling out of its mouth and touching her big toe. In the middle of trying to construct a grass MuMu to cover herself while waiting for her clothes to dry, she stared first at the lizard and then at him.

"Gag me," she said.

"Thou might wish to refrain from such comments." Morogh squatted down, resting his forearms upon his knees. "My kind hath ways of proving unusually accommodating when least expected to those who beseech us."

It was funny, the things one learned while trapped on a tropical island. Cook an iguana long enough and it'll taste just like chicken. Which was a pleasant surprise and made the whole experience of eating something with head, feet, and tail still attached, a little less disgusting. To be perfectly honest, the only thing that really detracted from the pleasure of breaking one's fast with a demon, was the fact that, sometime during the last hour, she'd begun to itch all over.

"Do not scratch," Morogh told her.

"I'm not scratching," she argued, scratching a particularly persistent itch on her knee.

"Thou art making the irritation worse."

"No, you've been pretty much on par the whole time I've known you."

His look was at once annoyed and mildly bemused. "Thy tongue grows waspish without cause. I mean merely to point out that the more thee scratches to relieve thy suffering, the more the rash doth spread."

She looked down. "There's a rash now?" She groaned and scratched with renewed vigor. "It's got to be the grass."

"Nay. Twas the bush thee rocked thyself in while weeping."

"I wasn't weeping!" she snapped.

"Ah, thy pardon, it was--as thee did already say--something in thine eyes."

"That's right. And besides, I fell in a Rhody. I've got five around my house, so I know for a fact I'm not allergic to them."

"Twas not a 'Rhody', but a poisonous bush. The branches thee broke crashing into it hath caused its sap to touch thy skin."

"Oh, great." Giving into the persistent itching, she took her makeshift MuMu off and threw it across the fresh water pond. She sat on the moss, naked and itching. The MuMu

hadn't been very effective in covering her anyway. Every time she moved, her breasts parted the grassy clusters and her rosy nipples peeked through. And when she hunched her shoulders to hide them again, she mooned the entire rainforest behind her. There was a marsupial cuscus crouching on a branch two trees back getting an excellent lesson in human anatomy.

"If thou persists upon scratching, thy skin shall split into weeping sores and twice as long shall the irritation last upon thee. The fouling of blood by open wounds can prove murderous at speeds even my kind doth admire. Mortal life is fragile, little morsel...all the more so to one alone."

"Aargh!" Summer growled, throwing her head back as she rubbed her fingers up and down all over her neck. She quickly sat on her hands to keep from scratching anymore, but the more she tried not to, the worse the itching seemed to intensify. She sucked an aggravated breath, the air hissing between her teeth. "Can't you conjure up some hydrocortisone cream or something?"

He smiled, showing the points of his teeth. "And what would thou give to me in turn?" "My eternal gratitude," she offered hopefully.

He laughed at her.

"Oh!" Even the bottom of her feet itched, and she became something of a mini contortionist trying to scratch between all her toes with one hand and yet still reach that illusively itchy spot between her shoulder blades with the other. When the tip of her finger finally got it, the relief of scratching felt almost orgasmic.

"Keep thine hands off," he admonished. "Thou only makes it worse."

"Well then, conjure me something to stop the itching!"

"In exchange for what?" he said calmly. "My kind is not known for charitable acts of giving."

"I know what you want, and you can't have me!" Summer snapped, hugging herself as she scratched both upper arms at once.

"If thou persists in doing as I have told thee not to, and cause for lesions to appear upon thy skin, I shall discipline thee in the most severe of manners. And, do I mean, not that sweet pain that thee craves to warm thy backside so deliciously. When I have done with thee, the last thing thou shalt cry for will be more."

"Well, then give me something!"

"Thou hath a penchant for arguing in circles."

She wedged her hands back under her thighs to keep from scratching, but that was not a permanent solution. At best, it would only last a couple of seconds.

"I--" she said, then looked at him. She looked down at herself, noting the red flush of the rash beginning to appear on the tops of her feet. Almost all of her skin was covered now, and she sighed. "I-I'll give you a kiss."

He didn't even blink. He hardly looked all that thrilled, either. "A kiss?"

"I'm not going to sleep with you over this; it's not worth damning my soul for all eternity! I-I'll give you a kiss. Take it or leave it."

Morogh got up from where he'd been sitting. Walking over to squat down beside her, he braced his forearms across his knees and looked at her with his black, hard-to-read eyes.

"I will leave it."

"What?! You've been trying to get into my pants since the minute I met you!"

"Thou art wearing no pants."

"You know what I mean!"

"Thy mouth is still somewhat north of that to which I desire entry."

"Two kisses, then!" she blurted desperately.

"Ten," he countered, and held up one finger when she opened her mouth to protest. "And thou must mean them and dispense thy kisses with all cheerfulness. Each one must be of good exchange--no maidenly pecks will I accept from thee--and if I feel naught in thee but grim forbearance, I will leave thee to seek out thy own remedy to thine affliction."

She gave his pointed fangs a pointed look. "I thought two was a particularly generous concession on my part," she grumbled.

He flashed her a wide smile, showing the cruel edges of his teeth to their best advantage.

"Then I will take from thee only one, as forepayment, and trust to thee in good faith to settle the balance when thou art fully cured...and in better mood to relinquish thy debt when I do command thee come to me. Consider, little morsel. Thou knoweth this to be fair trade."

Disgruntled, she scratched her thighs while she thought.

Abruptly, his arm shot out and he roughly slapped her fingers.

"Hey!" She snatched back her smarting hand, hugging it to her chest.

"My threats to thy sitting comforts were not idle ones. Look upon all those places thou hath scratched and see the bumps now there. If they are cut by thy nails, they will become open sores. And no doubt thou hath noticed, but thou art far from medical facilities, in a place that takes minor wounds and makes of them mortal ones."

"And a dead woman doesn't make for an interesting lay?" she asked cattily.

He looked irritated. "In thy fevered days, before thirst and pestilence do carry thee to death, I expect there will be ample time to take thee in all manners that I desire. Do not be foolish."

She frowned. "All right."

He frowned right back at her. "All right, thou wilt be not a fool?"

"All right, I'll agree to the ten kisses," she huffed. "Now give me the cream."

He vanished, reappearing a few moments later with a length of thick vine, which he slit from end to end with his talons. "Hold still."

As he squeezed down the length, a clear ooze dripped onto Summer's head and shoulders.

She ducked, trying not to move. "Ugh!"

"Rub this upon thyself," he told her. "I would offer, but thee might hold it against me when relief hath again honed the edges of thy tongue."

It was a lot like washing with liquid soap, and no water. But the relief when it touched her skin was instantaneous. She groaned her enjoyment as the itching sensation died beneath layers of clear goo and tilted back her face, letting great globs of the stuff drip onto her forehead and chin. She even rubbed it into her scalp. It made her hair sticky, but the alleviation from the itching was so great she could have cared less how she looked. He helped her with the parts of her back that she couldn't reach. And when her whole body was covered, she just sat there with arms and legs akimbo, letting the stuff absorb into her skin. It was heaven.

There were two particularly irritated spots where the rash was at its worst: one on her shoulder, and the other on her hip, both of which remained especially itchy. But the goo did help take the edge of the need to scratch and made suffering the rash more bearable.

"Thank you," she told him.

"Feel better?"

"Yes."

His fangs showed in his smile. "Then thou shalt not be stingy with this, thy first kiss." Summer sighed. She tapped her thumb against her fore and index fingers, feeling the tackiness of the goo on her skin.

"I'm all icky," she said hopefully, even as she bowed her head, knowing the excuse would not deter him.

He smirked, letting the vine fall to the mossy ground. "I have embraced worse."

"Having never been to hell myself, I guess I can't refute that." She poked at the ground with the heel of one foot and, with her head bowed, missed seeing the look of annoyance that flashed across his features.

A kiss. Just one. She could manage just one.

Summer stood up. Turning to face him was one of the hardest things she'd ever done. She looked at his dark skin, his pointy fangs, the pitch black alienness of his eyes. Just a kiss, she told herself again. Not unlike kissing a cat, but with a lot less fur.

"Thou must mean it," he reminded her as she stepped up to him.

"Right." She placed her hand upon his shoulder. Breathing deeply, she slid her fingers up to his nape and pulled his head down to hers. Just before their lips touched, she closed her eyes.

She was a little surprised to find that kissing him was just like kissing any other guy. His skin felt warm, his long black hair as soft as silk where it flowed over and through her fingers, and his mouth--well, she hardly felt the fangs at all!

Uncertain whether that first fumbling attempt at paying her debt would pass muster, Summer tried again. She tilted her head a little to one side, opening her mouth and flicking her tongue tentatively along his bottom lip. He rumbled, a sound of pleasure that purred up from deep down in his chest and she felt his hands come to rest at her waist, pulling her closer.

His mouth opened to her shy, unspoken request for entry, and Summer couldn't help but stiffen an instant before his tongue met hers. He welcomed her into him, teasing her into boldness. She moved closer still when his hands caressed around her hips and down to cup her bottom. He squeezed, rubbed, drew back his hand and swatted her gently, the jolt bumping her hips into his. She felt the full, thick length of him, standing at stiff attention against her belly, and gasped into his mouth when he swatted her again. Once, twice, the third time harder still and right along the center of her bottom, his long fingers following the crease down, wrapping under the curve, laying the gentlest of taps against her labia.

Her knees buckled. But between her death grip on his shoulders and his hand cupping between her thighs, she didn't fall.

Morogh spanked her there, softly, using no more than his fingers, and the soft pats made her hips move as though with a life all their own.

The kiss entirely forgotten, Summer clung to him. Mewling whimpers flowed from her mouth to his. The hard bulge of his phallus seemed to pulse against her belly as she undulated against him, dissolving into his touch.

"Bad girl," he growled throatily. His hand caressed out from between her thighs and he smacked her bottom as she ground her hips to his. He wrapped one arm tight around her waist, and began to spank her both rapid and hard, first one buttock and then the next.

Summer stiffened in his embrace, clinging to his shoulders instead of fighting to break free. The heat of his swats turned to pain very quickly and still she didn't struggle. Her eyes squeezed tightly closed instead. Her hands on his shoulders curled into fists as, with bottom smarting and with Morogh spanking with increasing zeal, she keened a low wail between tightly gritted teeth.

Her hips twisted first one way, then the next, until throwing back her head, Summer cried out, "Oh please! Ow! Ow! Stop!"

And he did.

His hand came to rest on the full, throbbing surface of her lobster-red bottom.

"A very bad girl indeed," he chuckled, nuzzling the base of her ear when she, gasping and panting, turned her face away. "I like bad girls."

He kissed the sensitive lobe, then flicked his tongue snake-like into the hollow of her throat. Then he released her.

Summer's legs shook as she backed slowly away. She touched her aching bottom with one hand and her tingling mouth with the other. Her green eyes locked on his, the black as night orbs glittering down at her with knowing amusement.

Oh God. She was going to sleep with him.

Halfway down a steep and boulder-strewn incline a quarter of a mile or so from the beach, Summer stood panting on a craggy rock, one hand on her hip, and shaded her eyes with the other. "Am I seeing what I think I'm seeing?"

There was a boat in the marina. There wasn't a dock. That had been smashed into pieces when everything else was destroyed. A massive tidal wave had then scattered the pieces a hundred yards up the beach and into the edge of the rainforest. So unless some half-baked

captain was planning to swim with the sharks to get to shore, whoever it was was probably just lost.

But that still put him one up on her, since at least he had a boat. And a good sized one from the looks of it. Big enough to sleep ten people, she was willing to bet.

On the ground below her rock, Morogh stood with arms outstretched to help her down. He wasn't out of breath, but then if she could just pop from place to place instead of half falling, half-climbing her way down the cliff face, then she probably wouldn't be out of breath, either.

"If thou art referring to the boat, then thine eyes tell thee the truth."

Her eyes scanned the beach around the marina. "Look, there's a raft down there," she said in surprise. "I can get off this island!" Excitement trembled in her voice. "I'm saved! I'm going home!"

Before I sleep with you, her mind added. But she wisely left that part unsaid. No sense tempting fate.

"There art seven men total," Morogh told her, turning his head to stare out over the treetops at the marina. "Two remain aboard the vessel; the rest have come ashore. But they will not take thee off the island."

Her elation turned to confusion and then to anger very quickly. "How do you know that? How could you possibly know that? Do you know them? People are nice," she told him.

"They help one another! Particularly when they're men and the woman in helpless distress is cute! And I am very cute, I will have you know. Particularly when I'm distressed!"

He shrugged with his eyebrows. "People may well be nice. Pirates are somewhat less so."

"Pirates?" she echoed. "What do you mean pirates? There's no such thing anymore!"

"Aye, but there is. Believe what thou wilt, but better treatment would thee receive from me than from the men who walk the beach."

Shielding her eyes from the sun with both hands now, Summer scanned the beach again. "They can't be pirates," she said again. She sounded sulky, even to herself. "I don't see a black flag. All pirates have black flags."

"If thou runneth to them," Morogh said patiently, "and if they should decide not to kill thee outright, they shall no doubt mount thee in turns, as pirates are known to do with cute women in helpless distress."

She dropped her hands and stared at him.

"Then, again if they decide to allow thee thy life and if they do not simply leave thee stranded here, they may indeed take thee aboard their vessel, but only so they might avail themselves of thy lovely body whenever the whim doth arise. Days, weeks, perhaps even months from now, when they finally tire of thee, thou shalt either be given unto the mercy of the sea and sharks, or spend the rest of thy life wallowing in that lavish Mid-Eastern luxury that is called slavery and ill treatment."

Summer grumbled a particularly choice and colorful expletive under her breath.

"Impossible," he told her, a hint of amusement dancing in his eyes. "My mother died long before I achieved the sexual maturity to maintain an erection, much less an interest in the female form."

Scowling, she reached down to take his proffered hand and allowed him to help her down off the rock.

"Dost thou require more gel?" he asked. "Twice now have I have seen thee scratching upon thy back."

Summer looked down in surprise, noticing for the first time that she was indeed scratching. Though the rash still covered her nearly head to toe, the natural anti-itch of the vine he'd found seemed to last forever. Except on those two spots where bumps had appeared. The one on her back was the worst, and she guiltily yanked her hand out of her shirt. "Yeah, I guess I do."

Morogh disappeared, returning a moment later with a short stretch of vine in his hands. She turned around so that he could apply the stuff and lifted the hem of her shirt high above her waist. It was amazing how quickly one could become accustomed to being partially unclothed while in front of another. Raising her shirt bared her bottom to him, but she hardly spared that a thought.

His fingers lightly touched the small of her back, exploring the itchiest area for only a second. Then he took hold of her upper arm.

"What?"

He didn't answer her, but instead selected a relatively flat rock from the boulders scattered along the face of the cliff. He sat down, pulling her up to his right side as he braced his legs for stability and made himself comfortable.

"What?" she asked again, a little louder this time.

"Over my knees," he told her.

Summer instantly balked. "Uh...I don't think so." She eyed his lap nervously. "You don't need me over there to put that stuff on my back."

"No," he agreed. "Though it does present thee rather conveniently for the paddling that will follow."

She stiffened her legs, pulling back on her captured arm and shaking her head. "You can't!"

"I told thee what would happen if thee opened the wounds upon thy skin. I guarantee thou will take my words more seriously when the blows of mine hand have done teaching thee how to listen."

"No!" She shook her head even more frantically. "I won't let you! No way in hell, no!"

He was implacable. "If thou doth not present thyself appropriately, I will give thee a switching of such proportions as to leave stripes upon thy hide for days to come."

She stared into his face, his unsmiling mouth, his hard, unblinking eyes, and she believed him. Her mouth ran dry and she began to stammer, "B-but there's pirates...Yo ho ho, remember them? They'll hear me!"

"They are too far away to hear aught but the ocean," he told her. "Lay thyself upon my knees. Now."

She looked down at his lap. She was panting and yet it felt as though she couldn't catch her breath. She tried pulling at his fingers, but his grip on her arm didn't loosen a bit. She shook her head. "Please! I won't scratch any more, I promise! I'll listen to you! Whatever you say!"

There was a smoky poof and then a switch, freshly cut and neatly trimmed, appeared on the rock beside him. She stared at it, utterly horrified. Exactly two seconds later, another poof and a second switch materialized next to the first. It was the arrival of third switch two seconds after that that startled Summer back into motion.

She screamed and tried to run, but her desperate bid for freedom ended abruptly when he hauled her roughly down across one thigh. He captured first one wrist and then the other, hauling them up behind her back, and promptly stilling her bucks and kicks by throwing his leg across the backs of hers. He was, she discovered with dismay, very strong.

"No!" she shrieked when he raised the hem of her shirt all the way up to her shoulders. A moment later she felt the cool drip as he squeezed the vine's ooze out over the rash on her back.

"First," he said. "We will take care of the irritant." With two fingers, he rubbed the clear gel of the plant into her broken skin. "Then will we take care of thy misbehavior."

"Please let me up!" she blurted desperately. "I will do whatever you say from here on out, I swear! I won't scratch! I'll cut my own fingers off before I scratch! Please!"

"As thou hath already promised me," he said as he tossed the used stretch of vine aside.

"But I mean it this time!"

"And I meant it the first time. As thou art about to learn."

She let out an ear-piercing screech when his hand connected sharply with her unprotected backside. She only thought he'd struck her hard the first two times he'd spanked her. But as his arm began to rise and fall, and his hand smacked and whacked all over the seat of her exposed buttocks, she began to realize just how big a difference there was between playtime and real discipline. And playtime this wasn't!

She couldn't kick, she couldn't hit. All she could do was wiggle, flop and scream as he paddled her until every inch of her bottom felt as though it had been scorched by the sun. Struggles like that were very exhausting, and Summer ended up drooped over his knee, panting raggedly and stubbornly biting her bottom lip to keep from breaking down into tears. The last thing she wanted to do was cry, but his arm was relentlessly driving her to it, the heavy smacks forcing her to give in first to grunts and gasps, then to frantic begging and wails for mercy that echoed off the rocks around her. She should have known better.

"Music to mine ears," he chuckled, and redoubled his efforts.

It was with no small amount of relief that she felt the last walloping blow of his palm bounce back off her lower buttock. His hand came to rest on the back of her thigh.

"Oh!" she groaned between gasps. "Oh, ow!" It took every ounce of self-composure she had to keep from simply bawling. But she stubbornly blinked back the tears that shimmered at the edges of her lashes and tried to pull her hands loose. "Let me go, you sadistic son-of-a--"

He reached for the first switch.

She'd forgotten about those.

Her eyes bugged and her mouth fell open. "Oh no, wait a minute! Waitaminutewaitaminute"

"I gave thee many chances to comply with my commands," he told her. "Thy rebelliousness has led thee to this."

"Your commands?!" She squirmed like a captured inchworm, unable to break from his hold even enough to put up a decent defense. "I don't have to do what you say! Who the

hell do you think you are?"

"I am the demon, Morogh," he said simply. "And thou art my morsel, to do with as I desire."

Her determination not to cry took a nosedive straight off the cliff side before that first switch fractured into ineffective lengths. The second alleviated her exhaustion and took her to new heights in frantic bucking and struggling. And as the third switch swished and whacked its way to falling apart, piece by one tiny piece at a time, Summer found herself draped limply across his knees, sobbing lustily and without the will or the strength to keep fighting. Not even when he lay the final ten stripes viciously down the backs of her thighs, branding her with plum-colored welts almost all the way down to her knees.

He held her for a long time afterward, her wrists and legs still pinned, letting her weep with her tears falling from her cheeks onto the pebbled ground. It wasn't until she tentatively pulled at her arms that he finally let her go, though it was only a partial release.

"Sit up," he said, guiding her with a gentle hand because she could barely see through her tears.

"No." She reached behind her, skimming the surface of her swollen bottom and touching only the mass of throbbing welts. She dissolved into sobs all over again. "Oh, it hurts! Geez, just suck out my soul next time, why don't you!"

Morogh shook his head, tsking, "The suggestions that fall from thy lips. Have I not already told thee to mind thy requests to me? Sit," he repeated, again guiding her into obedience with gentle hands. "Hold thee onto my shoulders."

"Oh," she groaned, as he positioned her to straddle his thighs. She lowered her head to his chest, sniffing miserably. "I hate you."

"Ah, but I find the act of spanking thee most enjoyable," he said. "The sound of thy cries hath musical appeal. The shape and bounce of thy bottom, blushing beneath my palm, whets my appetite for more. Would that I had conjured more switches, thou would yet be across my knee, wailing beneath the whack of my rod, your cries the sweetest of symphonies."

"Let go of me." She tried to get up.

His arms tightened around her waist, pulling her tightly to him. "Kiss me," he said.

She glared even more fiercely. "You can't be serious!"

"Most serious," he said. "I command thee, my rebellious one, give me the second kiss thee doth owe. Now, with the salt of thy tears trembling upon thy blood-red lips, and the

hitch in thy breath that bespeaks to me of thy suffering."

His hands stroked down from her waist, running lightly over her bottom, causing her to stiffen and suck a startled breath. Her head fell back on her shoulders and she quickly grabbed his wrists as his fingers dug in. "Ah!"

The strength of his grip against her wounded flesh made her back arch and her bottom wiggle and shimmy, and she inadvertently ground her hips against his as she sought to escape his hands.

"Weep to me," he said, "for the pain that I have caused thee, and I will comfort thee."

"No!" she gasped and panted, blinking rapidly to keep back the fresh tidal wave of tears that rushed to fill her eyes.

"Thy obedience I find charming; but thy defiance--" he exhaled slowly, the sigh rumbling out of him in a sound of sheer pleasure, "--how it does seduce me to thee." Letting go of her bottom, he cupped her face in his large hands. "I would taste of thy misery," he said. "Kiss me, as thou did promise in good faith, with all passion of heart."

With the urges to resist battling her desire to acquiesce, Summer reluctantly lowered her trembling lips to his.

The hunger with which her body responded to his touch, the feel of his mouth pliant and yet hard against her own as she opened to the bold sweep of his tongue, was frightening in its intensity. Summer began to cry all over again. Not the dainty sweet, sniffly kind, that made a girl look cute while crying. But the great, gusty, shoulder-wracking sobs that just wouldn't stop.

He drank the tears from her lips and kissed them from her cheeks. His hands slipped from her face, down her chest to cup her breasts. He molded them gently in his palms, seeking and finding her nipples, which stiffened into peaks as he plucked and rolled them between thumb and forefinger.

Within seconds her shirt was nothing more than a heap of white cotton lying forgotten in the dirt. Summer's head fell back on her shoulders as the heat of his mouth covered her right breast. He suckled at her nipple, and she felt the long deep pulls all the way down to her toes. When he cupped her mons, she needed no prodding to move against his hand.

"Thy body would know me," he growled throatily.

She moaned, though if it was due more to the effects of his teeth, scrapping softly back and forth across the peaks of her breasts, or because his fingers were parting the intimate folds of her, she couldn't tell. But she heard the wet slick sound of her very willing body readying itself to accept him, and her face flushed shamefully. And yet she couldn't make herself stop. Not with one kiss. Not with two. She met the mating dancing of his tongue

and latched onto his shoulders when a single, thick finger began to slide inside of her. It lodged only as far as the first knuckle, despite the movements of her hips urging him deeper.

"Thou would have me inside of thee."

The single digit began a slow and teasing impalement, sinking into and withdrawing from her in gradual degrees, until she ached to move upon him.

Her toes curled. "Mm," was all she could say, a soft sound made as much from trepidation as it was from the longing for more.

"Say it," he coaxed.

She panted, and shook her head, her toes curling even tighter.

"Thou wanteth me."

"I can't." But she wanted to. Summer shuddered, half-laughing and half-crying as she wrapped her arms around his shoulders and just let the feel of him overwhelm her. One finger became two, and the sensation of being so stretched made Summer fling back her head, gasping her defeat and lust to the sky. She grabbed his knees, instinctively rocking her hips in an attempt to feel him deeper.

"Thou art mewling like a babe," he seduced. "I hear the wanting in thy voice despite thy words."

"I can't," she moaned, even as she wrapped her legs around his waist. "Oh please, I can't do this."

"The labors of this shall be my burden to bear; thee need merely to lie back and scream thy pleasure."

"Noooo-o-ooooh!"

"Good girl," he laughed, husky and low. "Thou should feel the way thy sheath works upon my fingers. Thou desires me, to feel the power of my body battering thy womb. Say it. Say, I desire thee, Morogh my love."

Her legs trembled and shook.

"Come within me, Morogh my love," he whispered against her lips. "Take my body and make it thine."

She shook, her breasts heaving as she panted. "C-come within m-me," she moaned as his thumb found her clit and began to rub in time with the motions of his fingers.

She didn't have time to regret her words. He picked her up by her wealed and aching bottom and promptly lay her on her back on the ground.

Twenty-three years of carefully maintained virginity were torn asunder on a bed of pebbles and rocks. She wrapped her legs around his waist, holding him as close as he could come, and Morogh covered her mouth with his, hungrily drinking in her screams.

He had been very careful of his weight, bracing himself up on his knees as he moved over her. And still, her body hurt. All over. A good kind of hurt in some places, but others--like the places where the rocky ground had poked into her back and legs--weren't so good. And then there was her sore-to-the-touch, welt-covered bottom. His fingers had dug into her there, yanking her up to meet his thrusts, and once or twice the palm of his hand had swatted the side of her tender bottom for no other reason, she supposed, than so he could hear her cry out.

The pains had mingled, intensifying with the pleasure he'd given her until her body fairly sang with ecstasy. The culmination of it had made her scream, though she barely heard it over his own conquering, lion-like roar. The sound of him had echoed off the surrounding rocks. If there truly were pirates on the island, even with the surf crashing against the beach, there was no way they could have missed hearing that.

Afterwards, they lay entwined together for a long time. Though Summer really could have done without the sharp rock that was poking into her hip, she did like the feel of him lying on top of her. With her arms wrapped around his shoulders and his head cushioned upon her breast, she could almost forget what he was.

"Thou art an addiction," he rumbled huskily. "I could partake of thee many times and remain yet unsatisfied."

Eyes closed, Summer hummed. "Maybe next time you could partake of me in a soft and comfy bed."

Morogh raised his head with a dark chuckle. "Who hath time for beds?"

His hands scooped under her splayed thighs. He rose onto his knees even as he draped hers over his shoulders, lifting her hips up and back and bending her nearly in half. He braced his hands to either side of her head, looming over her, the head of his once-more eager phallus nosing and prodding against her glistening slit. He slipped inside very easily.

"Oh no." She bit her bottom lip, wincing as she was slowly skewered in the most uncomfortable and yet oddly pleasurable of ways. "I'm too sore for this!"

His smile turned positively wicked and he licked his teeth. "I know."

He took her right to the brink of coming, sliding slowly in and out of her, his unexpected

gentleness as arousing in its own right as the feel of him moving within her, and then he stopped.

"No please," she gasped, trying to wiggle beneath him. "Just a little more. Don't stop, please..."

Staring down at her, Morogh said not a word, but his face became intent and strangely unreadable. He wasn't seeing her, Summer suddenly realized. He was listening.

It became more obvious a moment later, when he cocked his head to one side, staring off into the distance. She held her breath, straining to hear whatever it was that he did.

He rolled off her.

"What is it?" she whispered, scrambling up off the rocks behind him.

"They are making camp."

"The yo ho ho's?" She walked with him to the steepest edge of the cliff, but even when she followed his stare down to the distant beach, she saw nothing except the rainforest's trees swaying idly in the humid breeze and the languid rippling of the ocean waves lapping at the shore. "Where are they? Can you see them?"

"Returneth thou to the hotel and wait for me there," he told her.

"Where are you going?" she asked.

The corner of his mouth lifted. "I am going to dissuade them."

"Oh." She blinked twice. "Well, I'll go with you then. I've never seen a pirate outside of the movies."

"I have commanded thee otherwise, and thou shalt be obedient."

"Commanded?" Her eyes widened and her eyebrows arched. Just as incredulously she added, "Obey?" Snorting once, she then stuck out her hand. "Hi, have we met? My name's Summer."

He half-glared at her hand. "Thou shalt do as I have bid thee, sweetly and without further comment from thy waspish tongue. I have laid my claim."

"Somebody's been in the sun too long!"

Morogh turned all the way around to face her, folding his arms across his broad chest.

"And now, when thou returns to thy room, thou shalt put thyself in the corner, nose to the

wall, and mayhaps I will not give thee another lesson in obedience when I do come to thee."

"Not only have you been in the sun too long, you've been swallowing sea water!" She slapped her hands to her hips angrily. "Let's get one thing straight right now, buster! I don't belong to you! I could sleep with you until the cows come a-swimmin' on home to the Kendermic Island and I still won't be yours!"

"Go," he said. "Now."

Scowling fiercely, Summer glared at him. But there was something so unusually serious about him that, after only a moment's frowning, she started back up the cliff and headed for the hotel on the other side of the relatively small island.

"This is what I get for sleeping with a demon," she muttered to herself under her breath. "I knew better; can't say I didn't. Ten-to-one, nine months from now I give birth to the anti-Christ. Crap. An hour of hot, sweaty sex on a tropical island, and I've probably doomed all of mankind."

She might have to go, but she didn't have to go gracefully. She stomped all the way back, making a satisfying production out of crashing angrily through the brush and bushes, although she did carefully skirt around every rhododendron she came across.

And when at last she reached the cabin where she'd spent the previous night, she flung herself face down over the foot of the bed. Scrambling immediately back to her feet, she grabbed a fist-sized bug off the coverlet, tossed it through the missing wall, and then flung herself down on the bed again.

Folding her arms, she propped her chin on the back of her crossed wrists and pouted. Maybe he could treat her like a child, sending her to her 'room' like this, but there was absolutely no way in hell that she was going to further humiliate herself by standing with her nose pressed to the corner. Who did he think he was, anyway?

There was a sulphurous poof and a switch, freshly cut and neatly trimmed, appeared on the bed just inches from the end of her nose. For one second, she stared at it in perfect shock. A second poof had another switch materializing next to the first, and suddenly Summer was struggling to get off the bed.

She launched herself into the nearest corner. Lacing her hands behind her head, she bent to press the tip of her nose to the join of the wall and stayed there, not moving until Morogh returned.

"I don't want another spanking!" she wailed, covering her bottom with both hands when he picked up the first of the two switches.

He only smiled, showing the points of his teeth. "Too bad."

* * * * *

Morogh squatted perfectly balanced on the foot rail of Summer's bed. It was night, the moon was out, and Summer was sound asleep, too exhausted even to dream.

Her lashes were still damp from crying, her nose still red at the tip. She had wrapped the sheet around her shoulders, but unable to bear even the light caress of the cotton weave upon her swollen and thoroughly wealed backside, the lower half of her body remained bare to the relatively cooler night air. Now and then she still whimpered, and it was becoming very clear to him that he was going to have to mount her many times more before exhausting his insatiable hunger for her from his system.

He reached down to pick a broken segment of switch off the mattress between her feet. Flicking it to the floor, he then braced his forearms back on his knees, laced his hands together, and patiently waited for the dawn.

He tipped his ear to the night, listening.

Mortal men were nowhere near as much fun as they used to be. His attempts at dissuading the pirates from remaining on the island had not gone as well as he'd intended. He fondly recalled the good old days, when popping into being before a group of unwary men could send them all scrambling for the nearest church. Sure, the pirates had screamed convincingly enough, but then promptly sprayed his instantly vacated position with machine gun fire. He blamed television. Damned desensitizing effect.

And what was worse, they were not only still on the island, but had taken it into their heads to hunt down the 'creature' and dispose of it. He was growing more irritated the closer the group of heavily-armed men came to the ruined hotel. In fact--he turned his head and listened--one just crossed the resort's perimeter now.

He growled, a low, long animal sound that carried through the cabin. The pirate must have heard him, because he gave a shout and the other four men came running.

Now Morogh was really annoyed. He reached down, closing his hand around Summer's ankle.

She awoke with a start, thrashing sleepily between the bed sheets as she heaved herself up on her hands and knees and cried out, "I don't want another spanking! I'll be good, I promise!"

He could hear their footfalls now, crashing through the leaves and the brush as they neared.

"What--" Summer shrieked when he dumped her off the bed and onto the floor behind him.

Erupting into the air, he abruptly shed his humanoid form. He spread his arms and the

massive leathery wings of his back, bellowing his outrage and spewing black flame from his mouth. The edges of the missing wall caught fire and singed the hair right off the first man foolish enough to poke his head through opening.

The pirate screamed.

So did Summer. When he looked back at her, she scrambled backwards into her naughty girl corner, her eyes wide with shock as she took in the sight of him: black as midnight, horns sprouting from his head, his temples, down the line of his jaw, across the breadth of his barrel chest and dotting his spine like spikes all the way down his back.

She looked absolutely terrified while, outside, the pirates were regrouping. Morogh's tail flicked irritably from side to side. Neither was the effect he'd been hoping for.

"Get down," he rumbled at her.

Summer dropped to kiss the carpet in the quickest show of obedience that he'd yet received from her.

Morogh cracked only the barest of smiles, then vanished an instant before two men jumped in front of the open wall and sprayed the room with bullets.

* * * * *

Lying face down on the floor, as naked as the day she was born, Summer covered her head with her arms and screamed. The rapid firecracker shots from the guns were almost deafening in such an enclosed space. Plaster and tiny chunks of wall rained down across her hands, back and legs as bullet after bullet punctured the wall and what little remained of the hotel furniture.

Suddenly, it stopped.

Panting and whimpering, Summer lay still, her eyes squeezed tightly shut, and listened. Booted feet stepped cautiously into the cabin, crunching on wood and debris as the first man crept around the edge of the bed.

Swallowing hard, she opened her eyes and very reluctantly raised her head. She stared down the barrel of a semi-automatic machine gun without speaking. Without breathing for that matter, either.

The Asian man holding the gun turned his head and said something in another language to his companions. Chinese? Japanese? Korean, maybe? She wasn't familiar enough with Asian dialects to tell the languages apart, and it didn't matter anyway. After a minute of arguing back and forth, the man reached down with one hand, grabbed a fistful of her hair and yanked her to her feet. She didn't even have time to grab her shirt before he shoved her out of the cabin ahead of him.

Yo ho ho, she thought a little hysterically as her wrists were tied before her. An impersonal hand slid over the welts on her tender bottom, while another cupped the full swell of her breast. She hunched her shoulders and tried to turn sideways to escape his touch, but he promptly caught hold of her nipple and cruelly twisted it as though it were a stereo nob, effectively dropping her to her knees with a hiss of pain.

There wasn't so much as a flick of conscience in his eyes as the cruel man caught her chin in his hand and craned her head back to look at the marks of passion Morogh's kisses had left on her neck. His dark eyes flicked over the night-darkened rainforest surrounding them. Then he let go of her breast.

Snapping his fingers, he barked orders to the other four men and Summer was hauled roughly back to her feet by her hair. Whatever initial bravado they had mustered for their attempt at demon hunting had obviously faded, and the pirates had either come to their senses, changed their minds, or--as was more likely considering the fumes that rolled from their breaths with every exhale--sobered up. They went back to their boat, and they dragged her with them.

Summer glanced back over her shoulder frequently, but there were no signs of Morogh. She was seasick already, and they hadn't even reached the boat yet. Sitting in the center of the raft, surrounded on all sides by modern day pirates, Summer swallowed convulsively. As the waves rushed past them towards the shore, the raft pitched as though it were about to flip over. Seemingly unconcerned, the pirates kept rowing while she grabbed frantically each time for something stable to hold onto.

The pitches made her stomach sink all the way to her toes, especially after she saw the first shark. Barely illuminated by the light of the full moon, the ghostly grey creature had swum alongside the raft and silently rolled onto its side in the water to look at her.

One man behind her had jokingly grabbed her by the waist as though to toss her over on top of it, and she'd screamed, latching onto the pirate in front of her. Anything but sympathetic, he'd knocked her off him and shoved her down into the bottom of the raft.

And still there were no signs of Morogh.

Eventually they reached the boat that was anchored in the marina and the cruel pirate climbed aboard first, reaching back down over the metal rail for Summer's arm. When she was slow to cooperate, she was picked up and handed to him.

She had never been on a boat before. Large enough to comfortably house all seven men, it lurched and rolled with the motions of even the smallest wave. Her seasickness intensified. Being night made the feeling worse because although the moon was full and the boat did have lights, she could barely make out the individual waves until they hit the boat, and the floor beneath her feet would lurch and fall.

She lost the battle with her stomach and her supper hit the deck just as the cruel man

began to drag her below. They let her stay by the rail after that, hugging her stomach with one arm and sucking at the cool sea air, as though breathing deeply would help settle her roiling stomach.

It wasn't as though she could escape anyway. She had no desire to become a hungry reef shark's tasty midnight snack. One of the pirates was already securing the raft to the deck, and watching him, she knew she didn't have a chance of getting through even one of his knots before she was recaptured. And something told her they probably wouldn't be passing out door prizes for best escape attempt.

The vibrations of the boat's engine turning over made her already weak legs tremble. Her knees gave out and she sank to the floor by the railing.

She still owed Morogh eight kisses.

As the boat turned slowly out to sea, revving its motor and picking up speed, she put her back to the rail and her head in her hands. What was she expecting, for a demon to suddenly transform itself into a valiant knight and come charging to her rescue? Were he here, he'd no doubt be giving her another of his 'my kind hath not been known for acts of spontaneous good Samaritanism' lectures. She was on her own.

God, that was depressing.

With the boat now safely out to sea, the pirates began to pay her more close attention. They looked her over with varying displays of temper, and began to argue amongst themselves. She knew the precise moment when Morogh came into the conversation. The hand gestures for 'big monster' and 'lots of teeth' were surprisingly universal.

The cruel man ended the arguing with a single phrase, calmly but firmly uttered before he disappeared below deck. As one, the other six men turned and looked at her. Her usefulness as protection against the 'monster' had apparently ended. They were going to throw her overboard, she thought. She could see it in their faces.

Summer stood up when one separated himself from the rest. As he came at her, he pulled a gun from his hip holster, and she latched onto the metal rail with both hands. She swallowed hard. At least she wouldn't feel it when the sharks tore her apart.

The pirate stretched his arm straight out, aiming the nozzle of that gun right at her forehead. He stopped less than two feet away. Stared at her with unblinking, emotionless eyes, he pulled the trigger.

Summer smelled the sulphur a bare heartbeat before she heard the sharp report of the gun, and the bullet struck Morogh in the back. Not the Morogh she'd lain with upon the cliff side, but the fire-breathing, tail-flicking, leathery-winged Morogh, reaching for her like the tenderest of lovers, completely unphased by the shot that punched into his back.

"Kiss thee me," he rumbled as he pulled her body tight against him, enfolding her in both his arms and his wings.

Shouting, the pirates opened fire behind him and she felt the impacts of the bullets striking Morogh's body.

His hands caressed down her naked torso to cup her wealed bottom and lifted her right off her feet. His was a growl of sheer pleasure as his lips conquered hers, swallowing her startled cry even as he toppled them both over the side of the boat. It was a short drop to the water, and Summer screamed into his mouth an instant before they splashed beneath the salty waves.

His mouth never leaving hers, he captured her frantically flailing arms and pinned them tightly between her chest and his. She tried to kick back up to the surface and the air, but his heavier weight was pulling them both down. She panicked. Her lungs begged for the oxygen her scream had foolishly expended.

Breathe, morsel.

Summer squirmed in his embrace. Pulse pounding in her temples, her heart hammering in her chest, she tried to turn her face away, but his mouth stubbornly followed. His talons dug sharply into the flesh of her buttocks, startling her into filling her aching lungs.

She could still breathe. Summer's struggles died as she stole breath after breath from his mouth. She opened her eyes, but though the water was as blue as the tropical skies during the day, at night it was as black as ink. She couldn't see Morogh a bare inch from her eyes. Tentatively, she pulled her arms from his grasp to cup his face in her hands.

The wake of something small darted past them, slicing through the water from the surface above, straight down into the black fathoms below. The pirates were still shooting at them, she realized, as together they sank slowly to the ocean floor. The marina wasn't very deep, and the sand as she landed on her back, sinking into the sediment as though it were the softest feather pillow, was still warm from a day's worth of absorbed sunlight.

Pinning her beneath himself, Morogh lightly trailed his fingers up her body to touch her face. They combed through her mermaid's hair as his tongue mated with hers, coaxing her to respond in kind.

The wake of something much larger than a bullet moved in the liquid darkness, and suddenly a murky bluish glow of crackling electricity lit up the water around them. She only barely caught a glimpse of two sharks jerking sharply back, their long grey bodies bolting quickly back into the shadows before the black of night again enshrouded her.

She clutched Morogh until, his hands flowing down her arms, he took both her wrists and pinned them with one hand to the sand above her head. His mouth never once left hers, and she both heard and felt his seducing growl as his knee moved between her thighs and

coaxed them apart.

She blinked uncertainly, darting quick peeks around them as the blue glow flickered on and off again, the electrical sparks sending inquisitive sharks who got too close racing back into the darkness.

She whimpered, small bubbles escaping her for the surface, but Morogh was not easy to ignore. She could feel more hands than he possessed caressing every inch of her, keeping her legs apart, stroking down over her mons to part the fleshy lips of her feminine cleft and opening her to his steady invasion. He only had the one mouth, she knew, the one she was drawing air from as she kissed him. The other two that she could feel suckling and gently nipping at the stiffening tips of her breasts weren't real. Nor was the one nibbling at the sensitive lobe of her ear. Nor the one teasing her budding clit with flicks of a tongue that she knew didn't exist.

Despite her fear, he made her body respond. With pirates above and sharks all around, she surrendered to him, lifting her hips to meet his initial thrust halfway, her throaty moan sending bubbles racing to the water's surface as he made love to her in a bed of sand on the ocean floor.

* * * * *

It was the first sunrise of her entire life that she'd ever seen after having stayed up all night. Her eyes were a little tired, but her brain and her body were so wired that she doubted if she'd ever be able to sleep peacefully again.

Summer sat on the beach, hugging her knees to her chest, her toes buried in the sand, watching the sun coming up over the ocean. "Why did you leave me like that? Why didn't you just blink me away wherever it was you went?"

Squatting in the sand beside and a little behind her, Morogh said, "Such would have made the rescuing of thee much easier, I confess." His tail twitched in the sand, moving in serpentine motions. "But thou did tell me to leave thee be, and by thy wishes I desire to abide. Unless thine actions cause me deliberate harm, many of my kind believe it," one corner of his mouth quirked upwards, "bad manners to move mortals about without consent."

"You didn't have my permission when you popped me--" she paused mid-protest and her mouth became a round 'o' of understanding. "Oh, yeah."

"I believe thy plea was, 'help me, somebody please help me'," Morogh said. "I am somebody; I answered thy summons."

Shaking her head, she breathed a small sigh as she continued to watch the sun come up.

"I need to learn to be more specific."

He bent toward her, lowering his head to caress his mouth along the slope of her shoulder and up to her ear. "Thou appealeth to me still, my morsel. The scent of thy musk has lost its innocent allure, and yet do I remain disgustingly bewitched. I do not look forward to returning home. I shall be mocked for eons."

"I've never felt anything like what you did," Summer softly admitted. "Being under the water like that and...feeling--it was so--" Words failed her, and she shook her head instead.

Morogh half smiled. "Thy kind leads a sheltered existence. Only the second of many mortal failings."

"I suppose you get to experience all sorts of wondrous things," she said. "You can do whatever you please and nothing hurts you."

"I can be hurt," he corrected.

She turned from sunrise and looked at him. "How?"

He smiled again. "I am not so foolish as to say."

"You can tell me," she protested mildly. "I promise not to hurt you with it, whatever it is."

He laughed. "Thine hands art incapable of causing me suffering. Still, a wrong word spoken at an inopportune moment might make of thee a danger to me."

Now it was Summer's turn to laugh and shake her head. She turned in the sand, looking back up the beach at the first rainforest trees encroaching upon the sand. Spying a foraging marsupial high up in the branches, she called out, "Morogh is not invulnerable! He has weaknesses!" The animal raised its head and cocked an ear at them. Grinning, she faced him again. "Uh oh, you're in for it now."

"I see I must find ways of keeping thy waspish tongue consistently occupied," he mock growled. "Seven kisses doth thee still owe me. Wouldst thou enjoy repaying them at a different location?"

She blinked, her smile fading. "Are you taking me home?"

"I would prefer to take thee with me. With thy permission, of course."

"Uh...I-I don't think so. If I continue in your company, something tells me I'll end up with a pointy tail, wings on my back, or a set of horns sprouting out of my head."

He looked vaguely pleased. "I confess, the thought did cross my mind, though I did not believe thee likely to agree to such a metamorphosis."

"I'm not, that was sarcasm."

"Thou would look resplendent with a tail," he offered. "T'would increase thy seductiveness tenfold, as well as provide me an extra hold by which to grasp as I mount thee from behind."

"I said I was being sarcastic."

"A little one?" he persisted. "A thin and whippy appendage, to lift and hold out of the way while thrashing thy lovely bottom for some disobedience, or mayhaps for my pleasure alone."

"Oh, well, put that way." She pretended to think about it for half a second, and laughed as she said repeated even louder, "No!"

"Thou hast a limited perception of beauty." Morogh bent his head to kiss the slope of her shoulder and then, gently, he bit.

A charge like static electricity made the hair at her nape stand on end just before, with a deafening thunder-clap boom, the air behind her split apart. An oblong portal, outlined by steam, appeared a few inches above the sand. Inside, there was another world. The sky was almost as red as the earth. Strange stone-like formations grew up from the ground like fingers, each capped at the end by tufts of yellow, grassy plants. There were two distant suns, and it looked very hot.

In a voice like churning gravel, he said, "Hast thou ever wondered what life within the Sirius system is like? Upon one world, desert creatures stimulate themselves to mate through intricate song. Most notes are beyond thine hearing, of course. But those thee can appreciate are haunting in their complexity."

"What if I don't like what I see?" she asked, staring at the portal, but not moving.

"After I have collected the kisses owed to me, then I will bring thee home again."

She should have said no right away. But a tickle of curiosity was already growing inside her. She tried to angle her head to get a better look through the portal opening, then narrowed her eyes as she looked at him. "Do I really get to come back if I want to, or are you just telling me what I want to hear so I'll go with you?"

Morogh grinned, showing his sharp fangs. "Truth is for those who--"

"--lack the imagination to come up better," she said with him. "Yeah, I know." She sighed. Well, at least she was going into the arrangement with eyes wide open. "I'd like some clothes first."

"Denied. Thou art more accessible without them, and no one shall we encounter to care if

thou art naked or not."

The yellow grass-like foliage rippled as though beckoning her into that other world.

"You're probably going to get me killed within the month," she said, but she stood up anyway. "Okay, show me the desert creatures."

* * * * *

He talked her into that tail within the first five years, and her first pair of horns by twenty.

And yet it took two and a half centuries for her to repay her debt of seven kisses. But between each one, there were a thousand more that she gave him willingly. And oh, but the things he did show her.