

"She and Valdez are gone. Now quit playing possum and open your eyes, Gloriana. Talk to me about this chemistry between you and the shifter."

My eyes popped open. "Over. Done with. An experiment that failed. We decided we're better as just friends, nothing more." I sat up and touched his cheek. "Did you feel that? The zing we get every time we touch? Now that's chemistry." I pulled his head down to mine. "Kiss me. Remind me why I keep coming back to you century after century."

"Could it be you just like my...broadsword?" Jerry chuckled as he jerked the towel off my head. "Valdez was right. I shouldn't have disturbed your 'conditioning.' Do you need to jump in the shower and wash this mess off?"

I smiled against his mouth as I kissed him. Oh but I loved the taste of him. "Yes, I believe I do. Why don't you join me? We can play conquering the castle. You can use your...sword." I gasped as he pulled me up and into his arms to carry me to the bathroom. I had learned over the years how to distract Jerry when I needed to. Of course he was still smarting from Alesa's vivid reminder that Rafe and I had had hot monkey sex six months ago. So I'd show Jerry the best way I knew how that I still loved my sire and that my time with Rafe was ancient history, hadn't changed a thing in my relationship with Jerry.

But something I couldn't quite put my finger on had changed. Yes, I loved Jerry, but I realized I'd become more critical when we were together. Not of his lovemaking. Are you kidding? Jerry could please me in ways no other man ever could.

But try as he might to move with the times, Jerry's attitudes still had that eau de ancient male that could drive me crazy. Which was ridiculous. Rafe was even more ancient, according to a calendar. So why..? Maybe it was because Rafe hadn't known me back in the day. He'd only met me five years ago. So he treated me differently. Like the new Glory. Who could run her own business, balance her checkbook and shape-shift now without freaking out. Jerry's kneejerk reaction still was always to try to save the helpless Glory he'd first met. So not cool.

Well, I couldn't think about that stuff now. Not when Jerry was soaping my body and taking a fine long time with it.

"Oh, no, my lord! How did you enter the castle?" I backed against the tile wall as the water sprayed our bodies. I took a moment to appreciate his in all its masculine beauty. Sigh.

"Some careless soldier left the postern gate unguarded, madam. Now you must surrender your body or I will kill all within these walls." Jerry growled and held my hands

together over my head. He brushed my soapy nipples with his fangs and I shivered.

"No! Whatever will my husband say when he comes back from war and finds that I have been with another?" I gasped when Jerry turned me and slid one hand along my side to stroke my hip. He pressed a knee against me to widen my legs.

"You must tell him, madam, that you did what you were forced to do to save the castle. Now open for me." His voice was harsh as he slid two fingers inside, teasing a response from me that made me shudder. I tried to free my hands, to touch him, but he wouldn't have it. I felt his hardness press against my backside and the slide of the soap up and down my ass. Oh, yes, he was playing this game the way he liked.

"Please, sire, may I not touch you?" I didn't have to pretend the quaver in my voice or the gasp as he jerked me closer to probe my buttocks with his cock. For a moment I froze, reminded of a time when my shower had been invaded by the devil himself. "Jerry?"

"'Tis I, Sir Jeremiah, leader of the fierce band who has come to ravish you." He leaned down to whisper a soft word of encouragement. "Relax, lass. I'm here, no other."

"Then I must let you have your way with me. Pray, be kind, sir." I shuddered as his fangs trailed over my

jugular.

"Nay. Gentle is for losers. I've got you where I want you, wench." He grasped one of my breasts, his thumb and one finger pinching hard as he slid inside me, filling me until I moaned and bucked against him.

"Yes, I'm yours, my lord. Use me as you wish. I will do anything, anything to save my home." I let my head fall forward, my wet hair trailing to my chest. When he released my hands to wrap his arm around my waist and tug me closer, I couldn't hold back the scream of pleasure/pain as he surged deeper, pressing hard thighs against mine. He began to move, his arm tight as he kept us together, one hand toying with my breast.

"Say you surrender, woman. Say it." He growled and leaned over me, his fangs scratching my shoulder, the sharp scent of my blood filling the air.

"I am ravished, completely and totally at your mercy." I reached back and grasped a handful of his hair, pulling his head to my neck. "Drink me, devour me. I want to be everything to you."

"You are, my lady. Always." He roared his satisfaction just before he plunged his fangs into my neck, taking my vein and pulling my life force into him with a mighty draw. The water had cooled, but it didn't matter. We fell against the tiles and held each other, my back to his front,

together in the most elemental ways possible until he finally slid away from me with a kiss and a sigh.

"You will be the death of me, lass."

"I'll be the death of you?" I turned and ran my hands up his magnificent body. Then I reached around him and turned off the water. "Who shoved into me so hard I almost made dents in the tile? I have a security deposit here, you know." I managed a smile that widened when he picked me up and carried me out of the tub before he set me on my feet to begin gently drying me.

"Did I hurt you? Go too far? I think I took the warrior role to heart that time." Jerry slid a bath towel around me to pat my back dry. "I'm sorry, Gloriana."

"Don't be. I am well loved and could have called quits at any time. I know that." I reached up and swiped a towel across his wet hair. I did love him so. Even though I had to admit his warrior had been fiercer than usual. Residual anger? Probably. But he needed to work out his feelings and his smile now was easy and confident.