



MANDY M. ROTH

SACRED PLACES

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Sacred Places

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Dedication

To my Celtic warrior. Exercise extreme caution while near white horses and be sure to stick around for the next installment of our lives. Who knows what's in store for us?

Chapter One

“What, exactly, are you doing?” Coyle O’Caha asked as he pushed the mirror he was trying to hang higher on the wall. The thing was heavy enough to require several men’s assistance, yet Coyle held it with ease, as though it weighed nothing. The man made the extraordinary seem mundane.

Deri Sullivan stared at both his backside and his reflection and did her best not to moan. It was extremely difficult considering the amount of unintentional flexing Coyle was doing. With each sway of the mirror, another part of his body responded so fluidly, so naturally exotic that she thought she might have to sit on her hands soon to avoid touching him. His biceps flexed, and for one second, she knew for sure she heard herself moan.

No. I wouldn’t do that. Would I?

Cringing, she pushed the thought from her mind. She most certainly could and would accidentally moan, drool, pant, trip over her own two feet—anything embarrassing when dealing with Coyle. The man could

twist her in knots with nothing more than a smile. It was a gift she hated and loved in him.

The man clearly had no clue about the effect he had on the opposite sex. That or he knew and didn't care. The latter seemed more the case because Coyle was notorious for his suave exterior and bad boy rebellions. He had a way with women and the women he picked generally repulsed Deri. They seemed to lack anything of substance when talking about brains, but more than made up for it with breast size. Somehow, Coyle managed to stay just this side of being a male slut. How, she wasn't sure, but he did.

Coyle moved again. This time to reposition the mirror. It was a little too far to the left. Every muscle on his upper body flexed, causing Deri's sex to flood with cream. If the man cared even an ounce for her safety, he'd have ceased his activities immediately for fear he'd send her body into lust overdrive and kill her.

What a way to go. Death by way of Coyle overload.

"Well?" he asked, the bulging muscles in his arms looking as though they were about to pop while the ones in his abs made six-pack ripples that seemed to taunt her. Their "come and get me" taunt would be the end of her soon if he didn't get the damn mirror hung and quick. She even considered using her power to aid him, but thought better of it. Somehow, Deri didn't think a floating mirror would go over well in conversation. Especially not when Coyle was just a mortal, and in the lives of mortals, mirrors did not hang themselves.

At her house, anything and everything functioned by itself when power was applied. Once, she and her middle sister decided to have a tea party only to have it all crash to the floor the minute the neighbor lady came pounding on the front door, complaining about the racket. They'd paid her back later when they'd spent the greater part of an afternoon levitating her killer poodle when she wasn't looking. The dog never yapped at them again while they road their bikes.

"Damn thing," Coyle mumbled, drawing her attention back to his glorious body.

Coyle shifted his weight, forcing her gaze to his midriff. The urge to lick her lips was great. She held back. Deri knew she'd end up rubbing her clit for months to come to thoughts of Coyle hanging the mirror. Each flick of her nub, each clench in her pussy would be a direct result of her imagining Coyle being the one bringing her pleasure. It would be his dick

she pictured in place of her vibrator, his fingers tweaking her nipples instead of her own and if her dreams held true, as she knew they would, it would be him playing the starring role.

If only they were real.

Forcing a blank expression to her face, Deri held out the chart she'd brought with her. Her hand shook slightly and she realized that nerves had now gotten the better of her. That was silly. She'd worked for Coyle for the greater part of three years. Nerves were a thing of the past.

Right?

The tremor moved from slight to noticeable. Her hand didn't seem to agree with what her mind already knew was a lie. Coyle more than got to her. He consumed her.

"Here are the month's end records. I thought you'd want to take a peek at them before I lock them in the vault. Sorry I didn't get them done sooner but since it was slow, I took the liberty of organizing the storage room."

Coyle arched a black brow and stared out from slate-grey eyes. The tiny scar above his right eye provided the only bit of realism in an otherwise surreal face. The man was gorgeous. "Is this really that important right now, Deri? Am I in danger of going broke?"

Pfft, not unless someone swooped in and sucked your millions dry.

The man made no sense. He was loaded beyond belief but only operated the pub. His cousin had mentioned a time or two that Coyle had once owned quite a few businesses but had decided to give them all up, and go with a quieter life. He certainly didn't look old enough to have amassed a fortune before deciding to live life under the radar but who was she to question anything.

"So," his gaze was long and searing, "am I out of money?"

Not bothering to answer Coyle, Deri visually traced the swirling pattern of what he'd once told her was a shield-knot tattoo on his upper arm and bit her lower lip. It was one of many markings he had. He seemed to take great pride in explaining each one to her and Deri took care not to let on that she already knew what the majority of them symbolized. There was a lot she held back from Coyle, but he had secrets too. Of that, she was sure.

Another certainty was the fact the man was wet panty material in the flesh. He looked like he should be in a bodybuilder magazine, not hanging a mirror in the entrance to his seaside pub. It didn't matter. Coyle O'Caha did whatever the hell he wanted to do and no one told him otherwise. Well, no one except his cousin, Korey, who normally ended up with more than he bargained for having to deal with a pissed off Coyle, so usually he too kept his mouth shut. On more than one occasion, Coyle had tossed Korey over the bar. The two of them had a way of acting like schoolboys if left unchecked. Even with their short tempers, it was easy to see they cared greatly for one another. Coyle often mentioned his family was spread out around the world. Whenever he spoke of them it was brief and with longing in his eyes.

She couldn't imagine not seeing her family on an almost daily basis. If Deri even thought of moving far from home her mother would most likely curse her, forever binding her to wander no farther than the city limits.

"Deri, you feeling okay?" he asked, the slightest hint of the Scottish lilt he tried so desperately to hide shining through. It was every bit as sexy as he was. Why he insisted on trying to cover it up was beyond her. There were times when Coyle let his guard down and spoke with a heavy accent. It was those times she cherished. For some reason, knowing he was baring himself to her, even if it was only in the form of talking, meant something to her.

Growing up, Deri was taught that the greatest men in the world originated from the Highlands. Her father had only been allowed to marry her mother because of her ties to the motherland and keeping with traditions was expected of Deri as well. Her sisters would have to do the same. Though, Deri suspected her eldest sister would have issues following orders. She seemed drawn to Italians, which made their father crazy.

Finding a man worthy enough, according to her family's standards, was next to impossible. Unless the man was a living, breathing Celtic warrior with unearthly powers, the chances of him passing the Sullivan family tests were slim to none. She wouldn't be the least bit surprised to find her father had a checklist of prerequisites.

Maybe that was part of the reason she didn't put a lot of stock into dating. Sure, she had an on-again, off-again boyfriend who was lately more off than on and felt more like a male friend than a lover. Recently, their relationship had taken a rather odd twist and they'd been even less like a couple than when they'd first started to date. Since Chad, the on-again,

off-again guy, would never make it past her father's watchful and extremely critical eye, Deri never entertained the idea of a long-term relationship with him.

Coyle was an altogether different story indeed. Countless nights she'd begged any goddess who would listen for the chance to spend the rest of her days by his side, be the one who caught his fancy, won his hand. Countless days she'd awoke to heartache, finding that she was nothing more to him than a close friend, someone who helped run his pub.

Setting the mirror down on the floor, Coyle propped it against the wall and turned to face her. "Deri," he clasped her shoulders while he stared down, "have you eaten today?"

That would have been an odd question had she not passed out from low blood sugar levels two days prior. Korey had found her and had reported to his cousin almost instantly. Within minutes, Deri had two studs carrying on like nursemaids. They fought over what hospital to take her to, who would drive and if she should lie flat in the car or sit up straight. When she convinced them she didn't need to go to the hospital, they then proceeded to fight over the best way to care for her themselves. It was both cute and annoying. Traits the O'Caha boys seemed to master.

"Yes, I ate." It was incredibly hard not to be annoyed with him, in spite of the fact he was concerned about her.

He cast a questioning look. "Are you sure? You do nae weigh a thing. You should eat more. I'll make you something to eat."

Deri narrowed her gaze and resisted the urge to smile as Coyle's brogue returned. "I ate. I weigh plenty. End of discussion."

Apparently, Coyle had other ideas about what was plenty and when the discussion would end. "Did you get some sleep last night?"

No, I dreamt of you fucking me so many different ways that I lost count, but thanks for asking.

"Yes," she whispered, not going with what had originally popped into her head. As she stared at the other markings tattooed on his chiseled chest and lower torso, she sighed. If they were true and not just symbols he thought were the hip thing to have permanently placed on his body, then Coyle had a sporting chance of passing her family's tests. Too bad he

wasn't campaigning for position of husband. Coyle wasn't even in line for boyfriend. The man seemed to have blinders on when it came to her.

Speaking of blinders.

Deri chewed on her lower lip as she stared at Coyle's body. The man needed to learn to wear a shirt near closing time and after hours or she needed to pray to be immune from his natural charms. Either would work. Currently, she spent more time watching him from afar than she did doing anything else. It was pathetic, but she did it all the same.

The corners of his mouth twitched and for a moment it looked as though he was trying not to laugh. "So, you say you slept well then? Nothing kept you up or hindered yer ability to get a guid night's rest?"

As his grey gaze raked over her, Deri shivered. Goose bumps formed on her skin and Coyle began to rub her upper arms and shoulders lightly. She silently cursed herself for wearing the white, ruffle-trimmed camisole. She had a pink wrap blouse back in the office but as the storms had moved in, causing the humidity to rise and most of the patrons to clear out for the night in order to avoid driving in bad weather, she had taken it off. Now, she was left with next to nothing between her and Coyle's touch. Her nipples hardened to pebble-like points and although Coyle made her heart race, she could do nothing more than stand there, allowing his touch.

"Yer ice cold, lass. Something a matter?" The teasing tone in Coyle's voice told her that he knew damn well what the problem was. The arrogant jerk. She had half a mind to cast a spell to make him bark like a dog for a week, but held back. The last thing she wanted was to reveal what she truly was. Somehow the knowledge she was a witch rarely went over well with others. It was why she'd long since given up telling people.

Korey had managed to guess. It had been made easy for him since he'd walked in to find her using her power to help unload heavy crates of liquor after hours the week prior, but Deri had the sneaky suspicion he'd been on to her even before that. After a mini freak-out, Korey settled and swore he wouldn't tell Coyle her secret—that he'd leave it for her to reveal. As far as Deri could tell, Korey had done just that.

Coyle's smirk grew, as did his boldness. He moved closer, pressing his body to hers. The feel of his clothed erection against her stomach made

her gulp. That would never fit in her. She needed to stop dreaming about it. About him. The man would break her in two.

He chuckled as if he could read her thoughts and hear her fear of being impaled by his massive cock. She wanted to smack his hand away, but the thought of losing contact with him made her gut clench.

Instinctively, Deri went to slide her hands up and over Coyle's, dropping the folder she'd brought for him in the process. It and its contents scattered onto the hardwood floor. Bending to retrieve it, Deri brushed her forehead against the solid wall of Coyle's muscular torso. He froze. She continued to edge down him, placing her hands on his body more for satisfaction than support.

The wind whipped against the exterior door that stood only a few feet from them, causing it to shake fast and furiously. In a heartbeat, Deri was upright and pressed against Coyle, clinging to him. A soft chuckle came from him as he stroked her highly sensitive skin. He drew lazy circles on the small of her back and each caress brought a whimper closer to the surface. Still, she stuck to him.

"Och, it's only the wind. You do nae need to be scared, Deri. I've got you." His accent thickened dramatically and Deri would have commented if she didn't so like the feeling of safety Coyle provided.

"Baltic," he murmured, as he rubbed her bare arms vigorously with his warm, calloused hands. She shivered. Her nipples scraped against his chest, making her moan and Coyle stiffen.

He slid his hands around and brushed his thumbs over her hardened peaks. Deri could fight no longer. Her tongue darted out and over her bottom lip as her breathing grew ragged. Remembering that a few lingering customers remained, Deri tried to block the feeling of being touched by him. She failed miserably. The slight play of his hands was so quick she wasn't sure if it had been on purpose or an accidental brush. Regardless, her pussy was now soaked as need cramped her gut.

Fuck me was on the tip of her tongue.

Only Coyle made her body react this way and it seemed to be getting worse as time went on. What had started off as mere curiosity on her part now bordered on obsession. He consumed her waking thoughts and seemed to invade her every dream. It had to end soon. She had someone else in her life. Someone who wasn't unobtainable. Someone who

claimed to care for her even though he had a funny way of showing it. Why was she drawn to this moody millionaire who still insisted on running his own small pub on the seaside?

Sure, his devilishly handsome good looks had something to do with it. How could they not? The man's black tousled hair hung just past his ears and it looked as untamable as the rest of him. The seemingly endless tribal tattoos adorning his body added a whole new layer to Coyle's mystique. Setting aside his money, he was pure perfection. He also had the ability to not only make her feel safe, which was rare, but to make her laugh as well.

You and every other babe out there.

Women flocked to him. It was sickening. They arrived at the pub in groups of four or more, retreating to the back with Coyle until the wee hours of the morning. Deri refused to be one of his endless streams of women. She was not a Coyle groupie nor would she ever be one.

Okay, maybe not outwardly, but inwardly I'm a classic groupie.

Disgusted by her lack of willpower, Deri steeled herself to his touch, hoping it would make her immune to whatever it was he possessed. It didn't. It did, however, make her painfully aware of how close she was to being one of his groupies.

I will not throw myself at this man's feet.

Jerking back from him, Deri shook her head, sending tendrils of red hair scattering about as her clip gave way. Her hair seemed to engulf Coyle's large hands as it fell to the tips of her erect nipples, teasing them and driving her closer to the brink of begging him to fuck her.

The sound of her cell phone ringing caught her attention and saved Deri from making an even bigger fool of herself. Drawing back more, she tipped her head. "Excuse me."

"Of course," Coyle bit out, aggravation evident. "Wouldnae want to keep precocious lil' Chad waiting."

Rolling her eyes, she pulled her cell phone from her waist. "As if you have any clue who is calling me." She flipped her phone open. "Hello?"

“Hey, Deri,” Chad said, his voice strained. For a split second, Deri thought she heard a female’s voice in the background, whispering something low near Chad. She dismissed the thought although her mind tripped over it once more.

“Umm, hi.” She turned and tried to walk away from Coyle to avoid his penetrating stare. Plus, putting distance between herself and the headstrong Scot would only help to avoid letting him know he was right about who was on the phone. Though, Deri had little doubt the man needed no such confirmation.

Wonderful. Sexy and psychic.

Coyle moved with her, dwarfing her five-foot, six-inch frame with his close to six and a half feet one. The slightest bit of pressure from his hands was enough to hold her in one spot, not that she wanted to go too far from him anyway. No. Deri wanted to be pinned beneath those hands. Held in place as he used his long fingers to explore every inch of her.

Fuck me.

A cocky smile graced Coyle’s face. The urge to smack it off was great. She held back. “Tell Chad I said ‘hi.’”

Before she could stop herself, Deri had her middle finger in the air—flipping Coyle off in a very unladylike gesture. Coyle nipped playfully at it. “Promises. Promises, Deri. If it’s rutting yer after you’ve only but to ask. I’ll nae deny you.” He ran a hand over his bulging erection and arched a brow. “I wouldnae suggest being fool enough to tempt me again or you might find yerself spread out before me like an offering. And, lass,” he added in a low voice, “I’ll do more than take you up on it. I’ll consume you.”

Her jaw dropped. Coyle captured her middle finger with his mouth and sucked gently, sending sparks of pleasure through her body. Instantly, her inner thighs tightened and her pussy flooded with cream. She gasped. He chuckled as he worked his tongue out and over her finger with a skill she could easily imagine him utilizing to bring her oral pleasure.

“Deri?” Chad asked. “Babycakes, you okay?”

“What woman are you with now?” The question made little sense but it fell from her lips all the same. Still, it was all she had and the feeling that Chad wasn’t alone nagged her. It had been over a year since someone,

besides herself, had touched her in a way that was even remotely sexual. To have the one man she desired most doing it was almost too much.

“What woman?” Chad laughed. It sounded forced, with a nervous edge. “Deri, I called to tell you that I’m running late and stuck at the office. There is no other woman. I won’t be able to pick you up from work tonight. Can you catch a ride home with Gigi?”

Coming to her senses, she yanked her finger from Coyle’s mouth and shook her head. “No, I can’t get a ride home with Gigi because she’s off tonight and tomorrow and the next night,” she mentally counted to five before continuing on, “because she’s visiting her sister in Pennsylvania, Chad. Remember? You were with me when I dropped her off at the bus depot.”

It would have been so easy to zap Chad with her power. Too easy. Killing mortals was wrong. She didn’t need anyone to tell her as much. *Inflicting a little pain on the other hand—no, I can’t.*

Chad made a noise that sounded as though he were in pain and she instantly had an image of a petite blonde girl cupping his sac. She held her temper in. “Ah, umm, that’s right. I forgot. Listen, give me a call when you’re done for the night and I’ll see how busy I am then. If it’s still going to be impossible then I might be able to have Jimmy or someone swing by and get you.”

If you come near me, I’m likely to turn you into a toad. No. I like toads. A worm. It would suit you.

“That’s fine. This storm front seems to be keeping people home tonight so I’m not sure how much longer Coyle will want to stick it out. The sheriff called earlier and said the West End Bridge had washed out. Maybe it would—”

Coyle plucked the phone from her hand. A static buzz seemed to fill the air around her as she stared at Coyle. Reaching out, she ran her fingers through the energy, sure that she couldn’t be the only one to sense the disturbance. Coyle seemed unaffected. In fact, if she didn’t know better, Deri would have sworn the charge was emanating from Coyle’s body and that it was laced with magik. That was ludicrous. No human could put out electrical charges. Not even the great and powerfully handsome Coyle O’Caha.

A shiver ran through her as the static energy eased over her skin. Coyle's fingers intertwined with hers and for a moment, she forgot how to breathe. Staring into his grey eyes, Deri waited for a sign—anything that would explain his odd behavior.

“Chad, Deri's right. The sheriff was here earlier warning us about road conditions. It's silly for you to rush out here when my place is just up the hill.” The static buzz grew to titanic proportions. So much so that Deri actually gripped Coyle's hands tight, fearing it would somehow hurt him. It didn't. “You want her safe, Chad. And she is *more* than safe with me.”

Deri stared at him, wondering if he was going to shout “just kidding” soon or not. Chad would never go for her staying a night with Coyle. He was insanely jealous of the man and for no good reason. Coyle was her boss, her friend and nothing more. Okay, maybe the source of her every erotic dream and the man she would most likely sell her soul to be with but still it wasn't as if she stood a chance with him. She wasn't his type. Whatever that was.

“Great. It's settled then.” Hanging up, he handed the cell phone back to her and grinned.

“Well?” she asked, thoroughly annoyed with him but holding her temper in check.

“Looks as though yer coming home with me. Nae that I had any doubts on the matter.” Coyle assumed a stance, reeking of superiority, and winked, saving himself a smack to the arm from her.

“No way,” she said, disbelief evident in her voice.

“Way.” Drawing her in close to him, Coyle pressed his lips to her forehead, rendering Deri speechless. Too shocked to do more than stare at him, she watched as he went back to hanging the oversized mirror.

Another gust of wind slammed into the door, this one causing the door to visibly sway. For a split second, Deri thought for sure the door would burst. She yelped and practically leapt into Coyle's arms. The manly chuckle that came from him set her teeth on edge. Yanking back from him, she narrowed her gaze. “I am going to put this paperwork in the vault, along with the night's earnings. You would be wise to keep your distance from me, O'Caha.”

Chapter Two

Coyle watched as the fiery redhead sashayed towards the back office with her folder in tow. The woman made his dick hard by simply being in the same room. Seeing her ass in those form-fitting jeans was too much. Already he'd come close to tossing her on the bar and burying his cock into her. The idea of spreading her creamy ass cheeks wide and sinking into her anus made his entire body light with desire.

He needed release, and soon. The woman made him insane. Made his body burn. Oh, he would have her and she would never want for another. Of that much, Coyle was sure. He was also sure he would want for no other. From the minute Deri entered his life, three years ago, in response to an ad he ran in the local paper requesting a night manager for his pub, he'd only had eyes for her. Prior to her arrival, he'd often questioned his decision to relocate, wondering if remaining in the land he was born in would increase his chances of meeting his mate. His grandmother, whose age he didn't even want to begin to guess at, all but insisted he try a new path.

Adjusting his aching erection, Coyle did his best to calm himself. The woman would be the death of him. Never had he longed to bed a woman like he longed to bed Deri. She had worked her way under his defenses and become an addiction when he wasn't looking. The sad thing was he had no plans to kick the habit. No. Fucking the habit sounded so much better.

His mind raced to Deri's boyfriend, Chad. The term couldn't even really apply since the piece of shit was more of a leech than he was steady man in Deri's life. How could she dare want to be with a sniveling little pissant like Chad when she had a man like him ready to bend at her every whim?

And bend her over to my every whim too , he mused, adjusting his cock yet again. No angle eased the tension fast moving to throbbing pain.

It sickened Coyle that Deri seemed immune to his charms when she was the one woman on the earth who should have fallen for them hook, line and sinker. After all, she was his chosen one, the other half of his soul for which he'd searched so long to find. Any doubt Coyle might have had died the night after he met her. He'd gone home, as normal, and had fallen asleep to dreams of taking her, fucking her, loving her over and over and over again.

At first, the dreams were random, caused by outside forces but after a time, Coyle began to purposely invade Deri's dreams. The need to be

with her, even if in the dream realm, was just too difficult to pass up and he was too horny to resist. He may be an immortal sorcerer with almost unlimited power, but in the end he was still a man. A man who had found his soul mate, but couldn't seem to catch and keep her eye. A man who had reached his limit and decided that this would be the night he claimed what was rightfully his—Deri.

Glancing in the mirror, Coyle tried to view himself objectively. Other mortal women found him attractive and had no qualms in telling him as much. They raved about the size of his cock, the shape of his body, the color of his eyes and hair, his skills as a lover, yet none of that mattered. The only woman he wanted to hear sing his praises was the vixen with the temperament of a caged wolverine. She seemed to find him more of a nuisance than a necessity. Deri certainly marched to her own beat and that only served to make him hotter for her.

He cast a wary glance over the remaining few patrons in the pub and sighed. He'd never have a chance of sinking his cock in Deri with witnesses around. The girl was a lot of things. An exhibitionist wasn't one of them. That was fine by him. Sharing her, even a glimpse of her, with anyone else was not an option. No. Coyle had waited too many centuries before finding his mate. She would be his and only his.

Lifting his arms, Coyle called upon his power. Visualizing his magik in his mind, Coyle became one with it. Became his power. His energy. He was a master of his craft and his goal was alone time with his mate so he knew in the end that was exactly what he would have. For his power was as old as time, even older than he, and he let it rain out and over the patrons. To them it would feel as though static-charged air had surrounded them. Nothing more.

There was a white flash and a loud popping noise. The next thing he knew, the patrons were home, safe in their beds with thoughts of having taken a taxi home pressed into their mortal minds. He couldn't help but smile.

I am good.

The door to the office swung open. Deri appeared, her long red hair cascading over her shoulders and a pale hand on her curvy hip. Her green gaze scanned the pub and then landed on him. Confusion turned rapidly to anger. "You know, if you don't want me in your vault then you really shouldn't give me the combination. Pinning up idiotic, threatening phrases that make little sense is beneath you, Coyle."

“What?”

The slight roll of her eyes and huff she let out told him she didn't believe him. “Come on,” she held up a piece of aged parchment and began to read from it, “take thee from this spot. The follower of *imbas* shall not find peace. Shall not find the other half of their soul. I call on thee—”

Follower of imbas? Other half of their soul? Coyle's breath caught. The ancient druid in him kicked into action at the sound of words sacred to them passed over Deri's lips. “No! Deri, stop reading the spell!”

“Spell?” Deri glanced at the parchment and then up at him. It was clear to see she had more than a hefty dose of skepticism—or was that shock? He couldn't blame her for either. It wasn't as though she knew who and what he was. To her, he was just a man. Not an immortal sorcerer.

He rushed across the bar, needing to see for himself that she was unharmed. It was just like his enemies to sneak in a spell that Deri would read and cast upon herself, forever dooming them to walk alone on the path of life. He scanned the pub with his magik, searching for any signs of a threat but found none.

The second he was within two paces of Deri, Coyle lifted her off her feet and pressed his mouth to hers. The feel of her warm lips and shocked breath of air assured him Deri was, for the moment, safe. She didn't feel of anyone else's magik, so he was confident his enemies weren't waging a mystical attack on her and that allowed him to exhale a rather shaky breath. Though if she'd continued to read the spell, she would have no doubt brought to fruition the ill intent it carried. They would have been forever separated, longing for a peace they would never find.

Taking the parchment from her hand, Coyle stuffed it into his pocket and went back to concentrating on Deri's pouty lips. He claimed her mouth, thrusting his tongue into the dark recesses, needing to sample all she had to offer.

She fisted the back of his hair and, for a moment, Coyle thought she might try to tear his mouth from hers. Instead, Deri did something he didn't expect. She returned the kiss with every bit of passion he'd put into it. Their tongues danced together, darting in and out, slow then fast, fast then slow, as they ravished one another.

Time seemed to come to a standstill as Deri cupped his cheek with her free hand. The gesture was intimate and signified she just might feel more

for him than animal lust. At the moment, he'd take either, for once he spilled his seed into her, their bond would be assured. Nothing would come between them. As he thought about the parchment in his back pocket, Coyle swore to destroy whoever thought to take her from him. A chill ran up his spine as he was reminded of how close he'd come to losing his chance with her struck him full force.

He tugged gently at first on her shirt, but he couldn't figure it out nor did he care to waste precious time on it. Taking hold of her shirt, Coyle ripped it in two down the back. Deri drew back from their kiss, touched her swollen lips a second before her green eyes lit with fury. "Coyle, I happen to have loved that shirt."

"I'll buy you another one." He bent his head to command her mouth again. She artfully dodged him. He growled. "I'll buy you thousands of them, Deri." Still, she looked furious. "Oh, let me guess, yer precious *boyfriend* bought it for you."

Deri slapped his face hard enough for it to sting and that surprised him to the point he set her down on her feet. "You arrogant son of a bitch."

"Och, now that's awful presumptuous of you considering you've never met my mother. She is a lovely woman who will no doubt be pestering you for grandchildren. And lots of them."

Coyle was hoping for a smile. What he got was another smack across the face. "I actually feel bad for your mother. I can't imagine raising such a...a..." she waved her hand in the air and for a split second, Coyle thought he felt foreign magik surge around him, "...a you!"

"A me?" he asked, egging her on, his shaft getting harder with every second of her annoyance. He could easily picture those impish lips wrapped around his cock as he spilled his seed down her throat.

"Yes, *a you!*" Deri took a half step back and what was left of her shirt fell to the floor.

The sight of her pale, plump breasts and pert, pink nipples left his dick digging to break free of its confines. She crossed her arms over her chest, only serving to press the tempting globes together in an even more tantalizing way. He wanted to lay his cock between them and fuck her breasts. The very thought of shooting his come on her smooth skin left him adjusting himself yet again and snarling in frustration.

“Woman, yer killing me here.”

“Oh, I’d like to kill you.” Her next action, pulling her arms in tighter, offered her breasts up even more. He moaned. She hissed. “Stop looking at me and give me your shirt.”

Putting his arms out wide, Coyle grinned as he raked his ravenous gaze over her. “As luck would have it, I’m nae wearing one.”

“I know that, but you had one on earlier, you...you big galoot!” Deri stomped her foot and her hissy fit left her breasts jiggling and his cock throbbing. If he didn’t come in his pants it would be a miracle.

His mouth dropped. “You just called me an idiot.”

“Yeah, I know exactly what the word means.” Her green eyes blazed. “I heard you call Korey one before.”

The fact that Deri not only listened to words he used to chaff his cousin, but bothered to learn their meanings made his heart swell. She did care. Granted, she was livid at the moment, and he’d much rather prefer she learn more than insults in his native tongue, but she still cared. He eased his magik out and over her with the intent of soothing her.

Deri shivered and then glared at him. “Get the damn thermostat fixed in here. It’s freezing.”

“Could be because yer nae wearing a stitch of clothing on yer upper half but...ouch, what did you do that for?” He glared down at the shin she just kicked, amazed that Deri was immune to his magik as well as his charm.

The edges of her rose-colored mouth twitched and the second she flashed her pearly whites, Coyle had to bite back his own smile. “I didn’t hurt you and you know it. Stop being a baby.”

“Yes, but it wouldnae be verra gentlemen like of me to ignore the fact you were trying to inflict pain, now would it?”

Deri laughed and the sound moved through him, causing his blood to flow faster and the lust he’d tried so hard to command spiraled out of control. “Deri, lass, if you do nae want me to take you and fuck you against this very wall, I strongly suggest you tell me to go. And nae a moment too soon I might add. Seems my willpower is nae worth a damn where yer concerned.”

Something flickered through her eyes and he wasn't sure how she would respond to his proclamation. As she bit her lower lip and did a rather long, dramatic, cock-hardening blink, Coyle closed the distance between them. He could wait no more to claim his mate.

Deri dropped her arms from her chest and Coyle instantly cupped the mounds of sweet flesh as best he could. His hands were large. Her breasts were larger. "A fine fit, indeed, Deri. They were made for me. *You* were made for me."

Her breath came in the form of a sharp intake. Capturing her saucy mouth with his, Coyle assured that Deri's next breath would include him. He pinched her nipples enough to get a response from her, but was careful to cause her no pain. Her ripe flesh called to him on a carnal level, as did everything about her. Needing to taste her, Coyle lifted Deri high into the air and licked a sweet peak before burying his face in her lushness.

"Coyle," she whispered, taking hold of his head. "We shouldn't do this. People could walk in on us. We have to work together and I—"

He nipped gently at her breast before looking up through hooded lashes at Deri. "No one will walk in on us, *a ghrá*."

Deri trembled under the weight of his touch. "Coyle." His name fell from her lips with a hushed whisper.

He knew he would die if she dared reject him. He needed her. "Deri, do you want me near as much as I want you?"

"You want me?" she asked, clearly shocked.

"Aye, I want you more than life itself." He bent quickly. Running his tongue over her taut berry, he stared up into her eyes, refusing to let her see anything but the raw passion and need he carried for her. She moaned. He smiled. "Can I take that as a yes?"

Deri nodded and Coyle's heart rocketed. Soon, she would be his.

"Mine," he ground out, as he lifted her in his arms and kicked the office door open.

Chapter Three

Deri sat on top of Coyle's oversized mahogany wood desk, still in awe over what was happening. He'd cleared everything off his desk in a matter of seconds with the swipe of his arm. Her sexy Scotsman stood before her, naked and in full glory, his jeans long since cast aside, as were hers.

His cock bobbed from the center of a thatch of black curls. It looked velvety smooth and every bit of Deri wanted to test that theory with her tongue right before she used her pussy. It was finally happening. She would finally have Coyle in her.

Coyle fisted his thick, long shaft and stroked it. Each pass he made, he took a step closer to her. His grey gaze raked over her, looking as hungry as she felt. The part of her brain that kept telling her to stop—that she had someone else—was thankfully silent, having long since realized she would only ignore it. Her body, her heart and her soul wanted this man and she was about to have him.

“Look at that pink, shiny pussy,” Coyle said, his voice husky, hoarse. “It's wet, isn't it?”

Tracing a line down her stomach, Deri slowed as she reached the tiny strip of auburn hair she kept on her mound. Already, her fingers met with dampness. Coyle jerked as she slid a finger into her slit. Feeling bolder than she'd ever felt before, Deri parted her folds and eyed him closely. He looked as though he were straining to keep from pouncing on her and oh, how she wanted him to leap.

“Tell me how wet you are, Deri.” He stroked his cock methodically. Each swipe made her body quiver with thoughts of him ramming into her, taking her for his own. Never had she wanted a man to claim her more.

“I'm soaked.” She eased a finger into her heated core and it made a damp, sucking sound. “Come see.”

I've said that exact thing to him in my dreams before.

As Deri stared up at Coyle, she realized that his nudity, the massive size of his cock, the fact she was spread out like a submissive present on his desk was not a shock to her. It was as though her dreams of being with him had been preparing her for this very thing. This moment when they would finally join.

“That is the most beautiful pussy I have ever laid eyes on, Deri. All pink, wet and welcoming.”

His words made her shudder. “Ah, Coyle, yes.” She fingered herself, adding a second digit to the mix and moaning as she smoothed past her clit. “It most certainly is welcoming. Please.”

“Please?” He gripped his cock in one hand while he spit on his other. Rubbing his saliva over the head of his dick, he made it glisten.

“Oh, Coyle, please. I need you in me.”

Coyle bent before her and she whimpered in frustration. A lazy smile covered his sexy face. “No, you will let me taste of you.” With that, he kissed a path along her inner thigh, causing her legs to spasm involuntarily. Reaching her cunt, he spread her legs open wider and pressed his face to her pussy, inhaling deeply.

His grey eyes rolled back in his head as he seemed to savor her very scent, making additional cream seep from her already wet core. “Coyle.”

He licked his way over her swollen clit and she tried to scoot away from him. Sliding his hands up and under her ass cheeks, Coyle held her in place and swirled his tongue out and over her bud. He parted his teeth and took her clit into his mouth, sucking gently, sending Deri over the edge of the abyss.

She clawed at the desk, needing something, anything to ground her. Finding nothing substantial, she cried out as pleasure shot throughout her lower body. “Oh, Coyle!”

Coyle dug his fingers into her ass cheeks as he continued to work wonders with his mouth. The moment he began tracing figure eights over her sensitive clit, Deri took hold of the sides of his head, assuring he wouldn't go anywhere until she was good and thoroughly face fucked. He didn't seem to mind. In fact, he increased the speed of his licks, throwing her closer to culmination.

“Coyle, yes. There. There.”

He chuckled into her pussy. The vibration brought on another surge of pleasure as an orgasm tore through her, leaving her legs clamping down on Coyle's head.

Coyle lapped up her sweet cream, savoring every bit of it. Deri tasted as good as she smelled, like berries in a whipped, sinfully delightful cream. A cream made especially for him. It was divine. As was she. “Mmm,” he murmured into her drenched folds.

She bucked beneath his touch, trying to get away from him, no doubt in an attempt to regain her composure, but he refused to let go of her. No. Deri would not be permitted to regret what she had begged him for nightly these last three years.

Each time he'd entered her dreams, Deri had opened to him willingly, begged him to take her, fuck her, make her his. He could wait no more to claim his mate. It was why he'd brought about the line of storms, sent Gigi to visit her sister and assured that Chad and his cheating nature were previously occupied. Of course, Korey had a hand in making sure Coyle would have Deri to himself for the night. If Korey was on task, he was currently cursing Chad with a rather nasty case of the clap.

Ah, the perks of having a family full of immortal sorcerers.

It pained Coyle knowing that any man would dare to lay with another woman when he had one such as Deri at his beck and call, but Chad did just that. He was spotted often by Coyle's people, wining and dining other women while he was supposedly working late at the office. Coyle knew the man had not touched Deri sexually in close to a year because he'd been the one to cast the spell preventing Chad's dick from getting hard near Deri. Selective impotence. Cruel but effective.

It was low, but necessary. Deri was Coyle's mate and he could not jeopardize her falling in love with another. Not that it was even possible but then again, she wasn't supposed to be immune to his advances and magik either. Yet, she was.

Eyeing her pink pussy, Coyle ran his tongue over it again, tracing every silken crease. The need to unite with her was great, but seeing that she was good and pleased took precedent.

Inserting a finger into her, Coyle's cock reacted violently, jerking and almost spilling come. “Yer so tight, Deri.”

“Sorry,” she whispered, stroking the side of his face.

“No, do nae apologize for allowing me to sample paradise, *a ghrá* . It is a gift I will cherish for eternity.” He placed a chaste kiss on her palm as he stared into her emerald green eyes. “*You* are a gift I will cherish for all eternity, Deri.”

“Don’t.” She shook her head. “No promises of anything more than here and now, Coyle. I know what kind of man you are and I know better—”

He stood abruptly and stared down at her, unable to hide the hurt on his face. Her opinion of him mattered, more than he cared to admit. “And what kind of man am I?”

“Pfft,” she snorted as if he already knew the answer to his own question. “The kind of man who has a steady stream of women in and out of here.” She pointed around the room. “The kind of man who never seems to lack for female companionship. The kind of man who—”

Coyle shook his head and clenched his fists as rage tore through him. He wanted to let his magik loose, let it wreak havoc on the land around them, but he knew better. He knew Deri could turn him into an unstoppable monster or a gentle giant with nothing more than her words. Only she wielded that type of power over him. Thank the goddess for that. “I am the kind of man who has wanted to fuck you since the moment I laid eyes on you.”

“And now you can,” she said, as if what he said did nothing to sway her rather low opinion of him.

“I do nae bed the women that come through here, Deri. They come for other reasons. Reasons I do nae wish to go into with you at the moment. But I do promise to tell you all about it verra soon.”

Mainly because it would mean I’d have to explain about the world of magik and I’d really rather nae do that just now.

“Right,” she said snidely, moving to get off the desk.

Coyle stepped between her spread legs, fisted his cock and lined up with her wet pussy. Deri froze. If she thought for one minute he would let their future slip away over her misconception of him then she was wrong. Dead wrong. “Tell me that you do nae want me, Deri. Tell me and I’ll walk away.”

“Tell me the truth about the women, Coyle. I have a right to know.”

“A right to know? Why?” He knew why, but he wanted to hear Deri say it. He wanted to hear her sexy voice tell him she was his mate. She bit her lip rebelliously and glared at him. Narrowing his gaze, he drew his brows together. Something was off. “What are *you* keeping from me?”

“Nothing.” The defiance in her eyes made him puff up with pride. His mate was not one to cross. She was a woman who was capable of setting men centuries older than she in their place—namely him but he’d seen her lay into Korey too, so it spared his ego some. Plus, he had little doubt she could cut through his brothers and other cousins as well without so much as blinking.

Her pussy seemed to draw him in, kissing his cock head and sucking gently. It took every ounce of restraint he had to keep from slamming his body into hers. “I cannae do this until I know yer nae mad at me, Deri.”

“Then tell me the truth,” she said, looking as if she was about to cross her arms and pout. The entire scene was erotic in ways he’d never dreamt possible. He wanted her and it was plain to see Deri’s stubborn streak would impress William Wallace. Proving he was on her side of the battle would be difficult if he allowed his own temper to cloud his judgment.

Coyle sighed, internally admitting defeat. She was right. She had a right to know everything. “The truth is, I’m a seven-hundred-year-old druid sorcerer who oversees the safety of witches here in this region and who has roamed the earth in search of my one true love, *a ghrá—my heart*, never once believing I’d actually find her. The moment I saw you, I knew you were her—my soul mate. My one true love.”

There it was. The whole ugly, and admittedly hard-to-swallow truth put out for her in a not-so-nicely packaged way. He waited with bated breath for Deri to scream at him to get away from her, seek professional help, anything.

When Deri ran her hands down his torso and took hold of his cock, he gasped. As she eased her hand over his shaft, fondling the tip covered in pre-come, he actually had to fight the urge to pull away. It was that or pummel into her and he didn’t want to harm her.

“Fuck me, Coyle.” The soft plea left him tipping his head to the side, slightly confused.

“Did you nae hear me, lass?” He arched a brow. “I told you I’m a sorcerer.”

Deri nodded as she pulled on his cock. “Yeah, I got that part. I also got the part about the witches you oversee. That explains the women who are always around you. Now, fuck me.”

Still, he hesitated. She gripped him tighter, stroking as she went. His resolve weakened with each touch. “Deri, you cannae seriously want me in you.”

Clucking her tongue against the inside of her cheek, she laughed softly. The sound was so very erotic and so tempting he almost gave in. “Let me see. You’re seven hundred years old, so you’re immortal.”

He nodded.

“You obviously don’t suffer from any human diseases.”

Coyle watched her closely. “Aye, yer right. I do nae suffer the ills of man. And I do nae age.”

“What about children?” she asked, nodding as though she heard this sort of news daily. “Can you have them?”

“Me, no.”

Deri’s face fell and Coyle instantly set out to explain his answer. “Nae me personally, lass. I cannae have them myself. I require the aid of,” he nudged her pussy with his cock as he slid his hand over her lower abdomen, “my mate. As would any male. And I’ll take this moment to tell you that no other male shall be crossing yer threshold again after me. Am I clear? Yer mine, Deri.”

Instantly, Deri’s face lit with irritation. It was oddly endearing. “You knew I’d take that comment the wrong way.”

He chuckled. “Aye, that I did.”

She wrapped her legs around his waist and eased herself onto his cock. Coyle’s laughter ceased immediately as he strained to keep from coming and he was only inside her tempting pussy an inch at most. She was so tight. Hot. Wet. Molded just for him. He was afraid to move.

“Deri,” he groaned, a cross between ecstasy and pain in his voice.

She reared against him, almost managing to drive her cunt onto him more. Coyle held tight to her body, pinning her in place.

“Fuck me,” she pleaded.

“Deri.”

Lifting her hand, Deri stared up at him with a look that was nothing short of naughtiness on her beautiful face. He wanted to bend down and kiss her freckled nose but knew better than to move. Moving would be torture. He'd be left no choice, but to claim a woman who didn't want to be claimed—a woman who only wanted to be fucked. One who couldn't possibly understand who and what he was. He glanced around the room as a foreign power slid around him. His gaze went instantly to Deri as the power began to stroke his cock. A woman who was using magik on him.

What the hell?

“Deri? That's nae my magik I'm feeling.”

“No, it's not yours. It's mine.” She shrugged as if it were no big deal she was brandishing power around him. “You should have told me who and what you were the first night we met. I'd have told you to take me then and not waited three years, Coyle.”

“Deri?”

She moaned as she tugged at his waist with both her legs and her power. “For the love of dick, would you please fuck me already?”

“Aye.” He thrust in to the hilt. The second he was rooted in Deri their magiks combined, merging just as their bodies had. Each wove into the other, binding them for eternity. Her body tightened and her cry told him that she too had found her release.

Coyle's breath came in harsh, labored spurts. Being locked deep in her was even more amazing than Coyle had dreamt. Her warm vat held him so tight, so snug that the idea of leaving it seemed not only absurd but impossible. He couldn't be without her. Not now. Not ever.

He drew back, almost pulling out before slamming back into Deri. Pleasure left him seeing bursts of light behind his eyelids as he made love to his mate. And it was making love. Sure it was carnal, feral and raw, but it was with the woman who would have his name and, gods willing, his children.

She clung to him, digging her nails into his flesh just as his cock dug into her tight channel. It was pure bliss, being buried in his mate, knowing she wasn't scared of him or what he could do. Knowing she could do it too only made it all the sweeter.

Pulling her towards him on the desk, Coyle positioned Deri on the very edge. "I love you here, like this." He eyed the office. "Spread out for me for the taking, Deri." He held her legs up and began his rhythmic, sensual assault, pounding into her, racking all the pleasure he could while still making sure she gained from it as well. "*Gráim thú.*"

"Yeah, baby," she panted, tossing her head back as the walls of her pussy gripped him tight. "I'm coming again."

Coyle growled out as he let loose, sending a jet of hot come into her. He bent forward fast, capturing Deri's lips with his and thrusting his tongue in as the last of his seed filled her. She writhed beneath him. Their combined juices leaked from her body as he drew out slowly, savoring the tight grasp her cunt had on him, and smiled at the sound his removal caused. It was erotic music to his ears. A sound of which he would never tire hearing. It was the sound that meant he had spent his seed in his mate—forged a great bond.

"You are mine, Deri. Do nae forget that."

"Considering you've got me so full of you that I feel as though I could split in two and die a happy woman, Coyle, I don't think I'll be forgetting I'm yours anytime soon."

"Guid," he said, cradling her head to his chest. "Now, answer one question for me."

She smiled. "You want to know if I'm a witch."

"Aye, I do but that was nae my question." He propped himself up on one elbow as he stared down at the prize that was his mate.

Her brow furrowed. "Then what's your question?"

"Deri, will you marry me?"

Her eyes widened a second before she let out an ear-piercing scream.

Coyle jerked and waited for Deri to lay into him, listing all the reasons it would never work. When she took hold of his cheeks and pulled his face down to meet hers, he exhaled. “Is that a yes?”

“You have to ask my father for permission first,” she said with a gleam in her green eyes. “But just so you know, my answer is yes regardless.”

Chapter Four

Three years later...

Deri stood silently, watching her husband as he finished explaining the sacred symbols he’d etched on a blackboard before his newest group of eager students of the path. The symbol he pointed to, that had three columns, was identical to one he had tattooed on his upper right arm.

“And next meeting we’ll go into the three columns of truth,” Coyle said, motioning towards the door. “Until then.”

The women got to their feet and headed out of the back room as quietly as they’d come. She’d gotten used to seeing him instruct fledgling witches and actually enjoyed watching him. He and Korey took great pride in their duties to carry on the druid ways, while helping witches along their path. Coyle’s grandmother finally confessed to encouraging Coyle to relocate because she’d foreseen Deri being here. The woman, while tiny and looking to be around fifty, was more like four thousand years old—give or take a few hundred centuries. She still managed to strike fear and command respect from Coyle’s brothers and his cousins. She also seemed to enjoy Deri’s company. Having another girl in the family gave his grandmother an accomplice in finding her boys’ mates. With the amount of calls Korey had been getting from the woman, Deri knew he was Grandma’s next victim. The poor guy didn’t even see it coming.

Deri stayed in the dark corner, quietly watching her husband as he used his power to rid the area of signs of his teachings. When he was finished, instead of looking like the office she had very fond memories of, it looked like a bedroom straight out of a castle fairy tale.

“Coyle?” she asked, sucking in a sharp breath and instinctively grabbing her slightly swollen abdomen. She was only entering her third month in the pregnancy but already she had begun to show.

Coyle was next to her in an instant, sweeping her off her feet and staring down at her with concern in his grey eyes. “Deri, the wee bairn? Lil’ CJ?”

She smiled as she touched her stomach. “The baby is fine and Coyle Junior is with Gigi and Korey. They all but insisted on taking him for the night. I still can’t believe he’s one now. He’s such a big boy. He said ‘da’ two times yesterday and he made his teddy bear disappear once.” She swallowed hard. “I don’t think leaving him with Korey and Gigi is a good idea. What if—”

Nodding, Coyle arched a brow. “They will be fine with him. Our son is a handful because he gets his defiant streak from his mother, but he’s an O’Caha and we men stick together. He knows we need time alone. Knows that his da needs time to love his ma. He’ll be a good boy for Korey and Gigi.”

Deri snorted, knowing her husband well. “You cast a sleeping spell on him, didn’t you?”

“Me? No.” Coyle chuckled, grinning mischievously. “But I have a feeling Korey did. He’ll nae risk yer wrath and the lil’ one needs a full night’s rest anyway. I have to say that I thought you were hurt when you drew in a sharp breath. I felt every one of my seven hundred plus years creepin’ up on me, lass. Do nae do that again. My heart cannae take it.”

Glancing around the room, she shook her head. Coyle had transformed the office into a paradise. “I was just shocked by all of this. Why did you do it?”

“Because tonight marks three years since the night I claimed you. This is our sacred place, *a ghrá*. Do nae tell me you forgot.”

Deri’s eyes widened. “You did this for me?”

“Och, lass, you keep thinking the worst of me when all I have done is love you with all my heart. Have I nae?”

“Oh, Coyle.” She planted kisses all over his rugged jaw line as unshed tears filled her eyes. “I don’t think the worst of you. I think the world of you. I love you so much.”

Coyle laid her on the large, four-poster bed that now sat in place of his oversized desk and smiled. “Oak trees all right by you? I find I’m partial to them.”

“Huh?”

He motioned in the air above her head and instantly, the room filled with branches, leaves, an outcropping of such natural beauty that it stole her very breath. The woody aroma permeated the air as did the smell of moss and fresh water.

Confused, Deri lifted her head and glanced over her husband’s broad shoulders to find a tiny brook babbling through what had once been the bar area of the pub. She tapped him gently. “You are cleaning this up when you’re done, right?”

The chuckle that came from Coyle warmed her heart. “Aye that I am. But for now—”

He waved his hand above her again, this time instead of making more nature appear, he made her clothing disappear. She giggled, unable to hide her amusement with his antics. The man was insatiable. It was just one of the things she loved about him.

“Coyle.”

“Mmm,” he murmured, nuzzling his mouth against her neck and sending shivers down her spine. “Do nae pretend to scold me unless yer willing to let me pretend back. The thought of spanking you does something inside that—”

Deri arched a brow. “Then spank me, Coyle.”

He drew back slightly, looking horrified. “I changed my mind. I do nae think I could raise a hand to you even for the sake of a sexual fantasy, Deri.”

Letting out a soft laugh, she ran her hands over the backs of his muscular arms. “Maybe we can try it after the next baby comes.”

“I like the sound of that.” He went to slide lower on her, but she grabbed hold of him. “Deri?”

Drawing on her own magik, she used it to flip Coyle onto his back. His grey eyes were wide with merriment and desire. A sight she’d never tire of. “What are you planning on doing?”

“First, this.” She eased the tip of her fingernail over his proud male body. The man was still nothing short of perfect and he was all hers.

He smiled. “Yes, yers. And you are mine.”

“Tsk, tsk,” she scolded playfully. “It’s not very nice to read my thoughts.”

“Och, it’s no verra nice to leave me lying here with balls as hard as rocks and my cock begging to be in you but yer doing it nonetheless.”

Planting a tiny row of kisses over his Celtic tattoos, Deri bit back a laugh, doing her best to appear serious. “Oh, I don’t know about that, honey, I think,” she cupped his sac gently and slid her middle finger along the cleft of his ass, “what I’m doing to you is *very* nice.”

She inserted her finger into his ass. Coyle tried to sit up but Deri pinned him to the bed with her magik. He growled as he fought against the invisible restraints with only a half-hearted effort. Both of them knew he could easily break her magik. Slowly, Deri eased her power off him and his hands found her hair.

“Take my cock in yer mouth,” he whispered, his voice thick with need.

Nodding eagerly, Deri swallowed the ruddy head and slipped her mouth over his velvety smoothness. A harsh rush of breath escaped him and she moaned, her mouth still covering his shaft. The vibrations sent Coyle into overdrive. He tossed his head back and held tight to her as she continued to make her way down him.

“Woman, yer killing me here.”

“Mmm,” she murmured, letting her teeth lightly graze his sensitive skin as she thrust her finger into his anus further. Fingering the chestnut-shaped gland, she stared up through hooded lashes as her husband’s torso tightened, his sac drew up and his orgasm struck.

Deri stayed in place, drinking down every drop of his hot come, savoring his taste. Musky. Manly. Coyle. She whimpered as the last of his semen slid down her throat. “More.”

Coyle let out a shaky laugh as he pulled her up to face him. “Lass, I do nae think I could take any more. I need just a minute to recover here. I’m nae as young as I used to be.”

Laughing, Deri slid into the crook of his arm and traced lazy circles around his male nipples. He shifted their bodies and was over her in a heartbeat, staring down at her as he pushed his knee between her legs, spreading them.

“Coyle?” she asked, winded from excitement.

“Well, I may nae be as young as I once was but you do nae have to rub in how long my recovery took.”

She snorted, unable to believe her ears. “Recovery? It’s been about ten seconds!”

His scowl spoke volumes. Deri had to fight not to laugh. “Lass, I will work on only taking five seconds. Can you live with that for eternity?”

“Coyle.” She opened her legs wider to receive him.

“Aye.”

“Mortal men take *way* longer than ten seconds to recuperate between rounds.”

He looked horrified. “Thank the gods I am no mortal then.”

Thanks the gods, indeed.

“And thankfully you passed my family’s test,” she mused. And he had more than passed her family’s test. Her father had taken to him almost instantly. Before they’d finished their first meal at her parents’ home, her father had asked Coyle when he planned to make Deri his wife. Coyle had taken her hand in his and handfasted himself to her. They’d said their vows and married legally three months later. It was then she learned she was carrying Coyle Junior. When Deri had first told Coyle he was going to be a father, he passed out cold. Thankfully, Korey was nearby and helped to get Coyle to bed. He also never let Coyle live it down. The joke had been on Korey when Deri went into labor and he took his turn passing out. Gigi held the men together, forcing them to focus and the birth went over without a hitch. It was also the day they learned from Coyle’s grandmother that Deri was also immortal. Having accepted Coyle’s seed allowed her to share in his essence, his life force, his immortality. Their children were also immortal.

So much had changed in her life over the past three years. The idea that she'd nearly settled for someone as low as Chad made her faint. The idea of spending even one day of her immortal life without Coyle by her side sickened her. She loved the man more than life itself.

“Mmm, aye, it is good I passed yer family’s test. Although,” Coyle held tight to her and glanced down the length of her body, “had I nae, I’d have simply run away with you, Deri. Yer mine. Remind me again to kill that bastard cousin of mine for putting the fear of the gods in me with his threatening note.”

Soon after Coyle first claimed her, Korey confessed to being the one who left the parchment pinned to the safe. Coyle had been furious with him. Deri, on the other hand, had understood Korey’s motives. The man wanted to assure Coyle followed through and didn’t back out. The only way to do that was to threaten Coyle with the reality of losing her.

Deri stroked her husband’s sweaty chest and smiled. “You mean his prank. A prank that did what he intended it to do, force you to take the steps necessary to claim me. A prank he knew I was smart enough not to read all of since he knew I was a witch.”

He balked. “I would have claimed you on my own. I dinnae need Korey meddling—”

Putting her hand to his lips, Deri silenced Coyle. “And we will always be thankful to him for assuring you couldn’t back out, right?”

He thrust into her and she wrapped her legs around his waist. Coyle pressed his lips to her forehead and held himself firm within her. “Aye, lass, that we will. Now, if you do nae mind, I’d like to get back to loving you.”

About the Author

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Sometimes magic is the only way to break down the barriers to love.

If Wishes Came True

© 2006 Cassandra Kane

Available now from Samhain Publishing

Maddy Langton has been in lust with fellow undercover detective, Rafe West, for two years. Although they enjoyed a brief sexual encounter during an undercover surveillance, Maddy ran from Rafe before her lust for him jeopardized her career...and because bad boy Rafe loves his women blonde and gorgeous—everything she's not.

When Maddy helps a couple of Buddhist monks, the grateful monks give Maddy a ring and ask her to make a wish. Maddy wishes to be the blonde with Rafe. And when she puts on the ring, that's what she suddenly becomes.

Willing to do anything to spend a night with him, Maddy lets Rafe believe she's his beautiful companion. But does Rafe really want her or the beautiful blonde she's become?

Enjoy the following excerpt for *If Wishes Came True*

“Thief!” someone shouted behind her. “Stop!”

Maddy staggered back a few steps before regaining her balance. A well of anger bubbled and frothed inside her. The thief ran down the street with the monk's embroidered bag in his hands. Furious, she gave chase. Robbing a couple of monks and shoving a police officer were sufficient reasons to clobber the guy and vent her frustration. Now this she knew how to handle.

The thief had reached the end of the street. A couple turned the corner and he slammed into them, stumbling to his knees, giving Maddy enough time to throw herself across the last few feet separating them and grab his arm. He jerked himself away and her hold loosened, slipping over his vinyl windcheater and falling on the bag clasped in his hand. Gripping the

bag, she pulled. He yanked it back. For a moment they exchanged a fierce tug-of-war. The thief's pale face glistened with sweat, his eyes widening with increasing panic. Then he shoved the bag at her and ran, leaving Maddy sitting on her butt on the sidewalk, clutching the bag to her chest.

The thief disappeared around the corner, and the couple he had bumped into gaped after him, rooted to the spot in shock.

“You all right?” The voice was cheerful and accented by broken English. Maddy stared at the younger of the two Buddhist monks.

Despite the grin splitting his face, there was real concern in his dark, blinking eyes. Maddy nodded. Swallowing her wounded pride, she took his hand and allowed him to help her to her feet.

He held out the pieces of her cell phone.

“Very brave, very brave,” he said as she took them. He grinned at her as they walked back towards the entrance to the hotel where the older monk waited anxiously.

“It's my job—” Maddy began, but the young monk loped ahead to join his companion, jabbering excitedly in an incomprehensible language as she limped after him. The older monk, whose shaved head and wizened expression made him look like a sun-ripened raisin, nodded at him. His dark, sunken eyes appraised her as she approached.

“Here's your bag.” Maddy held it out to him.

The old monk took the bag and bowed deeply. Maddy shifted her feet, trying to remember the protocol for these occasions. She gave an awkward bow, her cheeks reddening. That done, she backed away to go inside the hotel.

“Wait please!”

Maddy stopped in surprise. The young monk bent down to listen to his companion's sedate speech. All the while, the older monk's dark eyes continued to assess her.

“He say he like to give gift.” The young monk's white teeth flashed as he grinned. “To say thank you.”

“No.” She leaned down to speak to the old monk so their eyes were level. “It’s not necessary. This is my job—”

“You must take.” The young monk beamed.

The old monk rummaged inside the embroidered bag and held out something that rested in his palm. It was a ring. It appeared to have been carved from a single piece of jade. Complex swirling symbols had been engraved around it.

Maddy stared at the ring’s glowing surface. It was beautiful.

“Oh, no.” Maddy shook her head. “I can’t accept gifts for—”

“Take.” The old monk’s gaze bore into hers, brooking no argument. Maddy hesitated for a beat and took the ring.

“You make wish.” The young monk said in excitement.

“You want me to make a wish?” What a silly thing to say. Yet she could not help turning to look at Rafe behind the plate-glass windows of the hotel bar. The blonde now leaned on his shoulder, whispering into his ear, her lips only inches from his. Jealousy clawed at her gut, and she wished fiercely that she was the blonde, about to have her lips ravished by Rafe’s.

Maddy turned back to see the young monk nodding. “It come true.”

*What do you get when you have an IQ that is off the charts,
the inability to let go of someone you love and a lot of spare parts?
The man of your dreams, of course.*

Performance Criteria

© 2006 Mandy M.Roth

Available now from Samhain Publishing

Dr. Aeron Braxton is on the verge of unveiling her newest creation—a droid who can pass as either human or Vanos.

An alien race took the man she loved away from her, but her revenge is at hand. Aeron has rebuilt Brad into a living, breathing killing machine she hopes will save the outer quadrants from a mass Vanos invasion.

Too bad the brilliant scientist didn't calculate the probabilities of love getting in the way.

Enjoy this excerpt from *Performance Criteria*:

Dr. Aeron Braxton had done her job all right. She'd created the perfect droid, more perfect than even she imagined. Brad had been only days into his rebirth when his neural senses kicked on automatically, tapping directly into his memories. From that moment, he'd watched the entire procedure—how she'd painstakingly labored over every tiny detail of rebuilding him to the way he'd been prior to the attack. Her dedication and determination made the transition into what he was slowly becoming easier.

He'd always been reluctant to admit there was Vanos blood in his family line. It was distant but there. Aeron discovered all about it after the attack. From the endless hours she spent talking softly to him, as if she somehow knew he was still able to hear, he learned that the doctors had wanted to wipe their hands of him the moment they found traces of Vanos DNA. Aeron refused to let them. She even found a way to take him with her.

Gods, I love this woman.

His chest tightened at the thought of holding Aeron the way he'd always dreamed to. Getting to know everything about her over the last few years left his already intense feelings for her bordering on uncontrollable. Her tiny quirks even made him clench his fists after she walked away, fighting the urge to take her then and there. Whenever Aeron was deep in thought, her tongue skated over her bottom lip. Brad longed to run his

thumb over the very track her tongue took before claiming her mouth with his own.

The cock which she had repaired in accordance to her deepest fantasy sprang to life—surprisingly enough, her fantasy was exactly what he'd already been packing prior to the attack.

She's always wanted me too.

The thought warmed him.

Aeron continued to torture him, night after night by undressing in front of him before crawling into the shower or bed. Some nights, she'd lie in bed, put her hand between her legs and work her clit until she kicked and cried out. He'd wanted to go to her, slide his body over hers and sink into her silken depths. He wanted to be the one bringing her pleasure. That was easier said than done.

Each night was harder and harder. The endless waiting, the yearning, the need to bury himself within her and make her his own, but he hadn't been able to. No, Brad needed to work on himself while she slept each night. He'd tweaked her already remarkable settings and enhanced himself far beyond what she'd hoped for, thankful he'd followed her into the area of science all those years ago.

His enhancements were almost complete. He had one small thing to do and then he would claim Aeron as his lifemate—his wife.

Brad walked over to the information download unit and aligned his wireless sensors with it by spreading his hand wide. He mentally commanded the computer to begin the process of downloading any remaining data on human mating rituals by pushing the signal into the unit's central processing unit. He had all the points the good doctor wanted covered, like weapons, hand-to-hand combat, the most effective ways to kill another, basic humanoid interactions, military operations and so on, but she hadn't thought to give him any other information in regards to sex and love. Brad had been a skilled lover of women prior to the accident but his memories were a bit hazy at times. Only the ones of Aeron were strong. He was confident, but only to a point. The idea of trying to seduce Aeron only to find himself nervous or a born-again virgin did not appeal to him.

Brad had stumbled upon the information all by accident and had soaked up every morsel of it that he could. It was during the downloading periods

he'd learned what a family meant to Aeron and how much he wanted to give her one. She didn't seem to believe he could be both a soldier for the cause and a companion but Brad knew better. He knew without a doubt he could be both a warrior and a lover to her. It was now a matter of proving his case. But first, he needed to insure he could give her everything he could have when he was a human male.

Stepping into the examination chamber, Brad waited for the door to slide shut before doing his final test. He took a petri dish and held it in one hand. Accessing his stored erotic images of Aeron pleasuring herself, Brad took hold of his cock and began working it. Slowly, he slid his hand over the long shaft while visions of Aeron sticking her fingers in and out of her sweet core flashed before him. Seeing her fingerfuck herself was too much, he stroked himself harder, faster, until his balls tightened and his body jerked. He set the tip of his dick against the dish and ejaculated over it. Granted, it wasn't the ideal testing situation but it would do all the same and it felt good to find release even though he wanted it to be within Aeron.

Gripping the dish carefully, he took a deep breath before he slid it into the chamber. "*Ahh*, computer, initiate a spectral analysis on semen...now."

The examination chamber beeped twice before ejecting the dish. Brad glanced at the monitor and waited with bated breath. A smile crept over his face and he had to fight to keep from shouting out with joy. It had worked. His final test was not only complete, but a success. After months of tweaking, his semen once again carried live sperm. He could make love to Aeron and hopefully create a family with her.

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