



# The Naiad's Wish (Immortal Bonds)

**Author:** *Isabel Murray*

**Category:** LGBT+

**Description:** Sayan never expected to fall for a human. He certainly never expected to bind himself to one, and yet that is exactly what he did.

Hed do it again.

Over and over again, hed choose Erik.

But...

He just wished that Erik would stop leaving him, and going off to attend to his responsibilities in the city.

If only Sayan could think of something to make him stay...

The Naiads Wish is an 11 000-word novelette about an insecure and possessive naiad and his patient human mate, with a minor tantrum, a joyful reunion, and more than a little bit of heat as Erik and Sayan smooth out a wrinkle or two in their new relationship.

This is best read after The Naiads Gift, book one in the Immortal Bonds series.

**Total Pages (Source):** 7

# Page 1

*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 1:17 pm*

1

“Must you leave me?” I sighed into Erik’s thighs when he told me that he was going back to his city again .

We were sitting by the fire, Erik comfortable on his sofa and me more comfortable on his beautiful hearthrug that had all the warm colours of autumn in it, from the soft purplish-red of berries to the golden-orange of fading leaves.

I liked to rest my head in his lap when we sat together this way. Erik liked to play his fingers gently through my hair.

“Must you?” I asked again. “You just went.” I turned my head and bit lightly at the meat of his inner thigh through his breeches, making him jerk.

“I must, I’m afraid,” he said, sliding his hand down to cup my jaw and ease my teeth away. I bit down harder before I let him do it. He smiled and stroked my hair. “It’s been a while since I last went. I had a life in Hallevalt before I moved here, Sayan. I still have responsibilities, ones that I can’t shirk simply because I’d rather be here with you.”

I frowned at him. “Yes, you can.”

A log slipped in the fire and sent out a shower of sparks. A few scattered from the grate onto the polished grey stone slabs of the deep hearth. They landed nowhere near the rug, but I’d grown fond of the luxurious thing and didn’t want to see it damaged. I sent out a tiny puff of mist to smother even the smallest lingering ember.

“No,” he told me, “I can’t. I have good friends?—”

“You mean Lars .” I pulled away to bury my face in his thighs so he couldn’t see my expression.

Lars .

I’d heard more than enough about Lars , thank you.

“Yes, Lars,” he said, his voice trembling with amusement. “And my cousin Geir, and a number of other friends. I don’t want to turn my back on everyone just because I am happy here now with you.”

“Are you?” I said, pushing his thighs wide and squeezing between them.

“Of course I am. Oh .” He gasped as I gripped his hips and tugged him lower, dragging him over the padded sofa towards me.

“Then stay here with me.”

“Sayan, I have made promises.”

“To me!”

“My sweet boy,” he said, and I moaned because that wasn’t fair. He knew what that did to me.

I was not a boy.

I was a magnificent, powerful and ancient being beyond the ken of mere mortals. I was seductive, irresistible and wondrous, and?—

Erik firmed his voice. "I have business to attend to. I have friends to keep up with. I'm leaving next week, and I'll be back two weeks later. You know that I will return. I always do."

I looked away from him. "I suppose. But I don't like you going in the first place."

"You don't have to like it," he said. "As long as you can accept it. As long as you can bear it." He cupped my face between his warm palms and held it steady, gently stroking his thumbs along my cheekbones. His lips curved in a fond smile. "Will you try? For me?"

I sagged. Yes. I would try.

I definitely wouldn't like it. But for Erik, I would try.

I shuffled closer on my knees and kissed him deeply. I undid his breeches then broke the kiss and pushed his upper body back to rest against the sofa, hauling his lower body to the very edge as I settled on my calves.

He watched with interest as I worked his breeches down under his arse. "Whatever are you doing, my love?"

He knew full well what I was doing. I could tell by the amusement on his face and in his voice.

"I am giving you something to remember me by when you have gone so far, far away," I said, taking hold of his bare hips and adjusting him. I gave a grunt of satisfaction when I had him how I wanted him.

"As if I could forget." Erik swept my hair from my face and gathered it up, holding the mass of it back in one hand. "I will think of you the whole time."

He would if I had anything to say about it, I thought grimly.

Keeping my eyes on his, I set my mouth to his stomach and kissed my way down.

## Page 2

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That had been two whole days ago and now here I was, floating in the small bay by the fallen willow tree where Erik liked to sit and drink his coffee in the mornings.

I was waiting and waiting.

It already felt as if ten hundred winters had dragged by.

I would know. I'd lived through at least as many.

In all my thousands of years, though, I'd never experienced a winter as I had experienced the one with Erik that lay behind me.

It was the very first time I'd been awake for the season, rather than sleeping it away down at the bottom of my lake.

Instead, I'd tended to my waters during the day, and every night I had returned to Erik's cabin through crackling frost and deep, frozen snow. I'd slept in his arms. I'd woken in them, too, wrapped up tight with my head resting on a warm and solid chest, hearing his strong heartbeat and surrounded by his lovely scent.

The ice and snow had since receded from my lake, and from the fields and meadows all around Laskeld. It still lingered in the misty distance as a light dusting of white over the slopes of the smooth and greening hills. Beyond, the soaring mountains were thick with it, standing stark against the blue sky of day and glowing pale at night. The mountain peaks would keep their white caps even during summer, but down here in

the valley, winter had truly passed.

Daffodils had already bloomed and faded in a slow, bright tide of yellow. Bluebells now hazed the meadow and the fringes of the forest, and I watched for the arrival of the sand martins who built their nests in the high banks of my lake to the east. I looked forward to walking with my Erik through the quiet meadows on cool misty mornings, or on long sunlit evenings as the swallows skimmed the long grass around our ankles, clacking their little beaks and snapping up insects to feed their young.

Most of all, I looked forward to teaching Erik how to swim.

He'd made excuses whenever I suggested it last summer, and by the time he agreed to join me in my lake, it was far too cold.

He'd waded into the water as far as his hips, jaw clenched tight and teeth chattering, and he'd been so utterly miserable and blue about it all that I'd released him from his promise and chased him straight back up onto the shore.

I suspected that he'd put me off for so long because he was afraid.

Imagine being afraid of water!

As if I would permit it to harm him in any way!

I did not laugh at him for his nonsense, though. I didn't want him to be afraid. I resolved to be patient with him, to coax him in as soon as it was warm enough. I'd teach him to love my lake almost as much as he loved me.

Almost as much.

But that lay a few weeks into the future.

Today, even though the willows that clustered along the bank of the bay were fully in leaf and the air was mild, the water held the chill of winter close.

I floated on the calm surface, watching the morning sun sparkle through the leaves and cast dapples of light and shadow over my body. A gentle breeze hissed through the long grass beneath the willows and rushed small puffs of clouds through the sky.

Erik would be home soon. I felt it.

I felt him .

I'd never expected to feel a connection to a human. To the land, yes. To my lake, of course.

But never to a human.

It was, I'd decided, because my Erik was truly extraordinary, for all he complained he was plain and old and worn out.

I didn't understand him when he said such things. I couldn't see how he was plain. I adored his earth-brown eyes and his silver-threaded dark hair, his face with its rough stubble and its large nose, and the strong lines etched around his eyes and his lovely mouth.

I loved the way he smiled whenever he saw me.

Oh, I missed him. So fiercely.

Sometimes, I wondered what I'd do if he never came back.

If he decided that his city or his pet Lars was more dear to him than I was.



If he went back to visit, and simply stayed there.

Perhaps he'd send his friend Henrik Berglund who lived in Laskeld to come out to my lake and find me. I am sorry, naiad, Henrik Berglund would say. Erik has found better things to do with his mortal life. You didn't think you could hold his interest once he'd grown used to fucking you, did you?

In my heart, I knew that Erik wouldn't do such a thing, not ever.

Not ever.

It didn't matter. Fear was never rational, and my mind showed me terrible images of Erik living and laughing in Hallevalt, wearing fine clothes, riding about in carriages, and allowing hungry young men to seduce him and wind him in their arms, and keep him.

I tried not to think of it.

Every time I did, my breath grew short and a horrible, jealous anger rose in me. It was alien and unsettling. I'd known many emotions in all my long years, but anger like this was new.

It was territorial and furious.

Seething.

If Erik stayed in his city, I decided, I'd just have to go to him and drag him home.

Even though my lake wouldn't want to let me leave, and would hurt me badly if I tried again.

I'd done it once before. Just once.

A mere handful of centuries after I'd fought the nix and made the lake mine, I'd been dying of loneliness. I'd missed my siblings. I'd missed their faces, their happy shouts, and the warm jostle of their bodies as we all ran and tussled and swam together. I'd missed my mother, who taught us all she knew before she'd sent us out to find our own territories. I'd missed her island, with its endless warm sands, deep glittering rock pools, and shady grey-green olive groves.

The absence of a life I'd once loved and had never wanted to leave was like an open wound. However much it had hurt, it was nothing compared to the agony that had felled me as I'd tried to pass the boundaries of my claim.

Fire scorched along every nerve.

Teeth bit deep into every bone.

My ears were filled with shrieking howls—my own cries, though I didn't realise it at the time.

The waters I thrashed in were hot and red—it was my blood, though I hadn't realised that, either.

I'd never tried again.

But for Erik, I would.

And I knew exactly how I'd do it.

It was simple: if I couldn't leave my territory, I'd expand it. I'd claim every last waterway, from here to the city.

I would claim them one after the other—every river, brook, and stream. Every lake, pond, and puddle. Whether it was a foaming, rushing rapid or the finest filament of water connecting one body to the next, I'd claim them all, over and over and over, as I made my way through the land until I found the Great River that wound through Hallevalt.

Erik had mentioned this river many times.

He'd told me that when it froze in the depths of winter, the city folk held a Frost Fair on the solid ice. They swept the snow clear and set up painted wooden booths selling trinkets, roast chestnuts, hot cakes, and meat pies. They filled metal baskets with fire to huddle around, and heated pokers to plunge into wooden mugs of spiced wine. They played music, and strapped blades to their boots and skated around, dancing with each other or holding races with prizes.

It all sounded quite mad.

The rest of the year, the river was a clogged, sickly thing, polluted with litter and fouled with human effluent, sluggish and crammed from bank to bank with boats transporting goods and people.

Some of those boats had once belonged to Erik, who'd been a rich merchant in his former life.

He told me that the river ran through Hallevalt and out to the open sea, and the place where it did was crowded with docks and warehouses, like the ones I'd seen in the larger towns that clustered on the southern shores of my lake.

Would I have to fight many guardians, I pondered, as I claimed my way to this great and monstrous river?

I thought perhaps not.

The time of creatures such as myself, those of us closer to gods than to men, was ending. In another century or five, we'd all be gone from this world.

I hadn't seen another water spirit since that far-off day that I'd fought the nix. I'd chased a curious little dryad away from Erik's cabin a few times recently, and thousands of years ago I'd heard rumours of an Undying One haunting the barrows at the foot of the distant mountains, a creature who walked the world as a man and had a reputation for war and for hunger. Other than them—one of whom I'd never even seen—and the shifter pack who'd passed by and left traces when I was sleeping one winter, I'd lived alone among humans.

No. I wouldn't have to fight. Even if we weren't all passing through the veil, who of my kind would willingly go near a city filled with humans?

For my Erik, I would. I'd claim every single drop of water that connected the distance between us.

I knew that the house he'd once lived in and had given to his young cousin, Geir, lay not far from the river. He'd be there, and easy to find—I knew the pulse in his veins as intimately as I knew the smallest current in my lake.

I'd find him, and I'd take him in passionate triumph upon the marble floors of the hall, and then, when he was dazed and mindless with pleasure, I'd carry him down to the river and bring him back home with me where he belonged.

Yes.

I could do it.

I would do it.

That vast a territory would be a terrible burden of care and weigh heavily on my shoulders, but I was old .

I was powerful.

I could bear that burden.

For Erik, I would bear it willingly.

I'd become the Naiad of Hallevalt as well as the Naiad of Laskeld, and he'd never again be so far away from me.

I'd brave anything for our love. I'd claim the world to reach him. I would?—

“Sayan.”

At the sound of Erik's voice, I jerked in shock, folding at the waist and inadvertently plunging below the surface.

I braced my feet on the lakebed and surged up to the surface, sun-bright water sheeting over my head and shoulders.

Erik sat on the fallen willow, watching me with amusement clear on his face.

## Page 3

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I stared at him indignantly as I scraped back my wet hair. When had he arrived?  
“You’re home,” I said.

“I’ve been home for a while,” he replied, leaning into the elbows he had resting on his thighs. “Don’t tell me I surprised you?”

“Of course you did not. You could not. I am aware of all things in and around my lake.”

I wasn’t about to admit that I’d been so caught up in my seething jealousy and my endless yearning that I hadn’t noticed him. That presumably, I hadn’t even noticed the turning of the world as two weeks slipped past like two minutes.

“I’ve been waiting for you,” I said. “I knew you were there the whole time.”

“You did, hmm? The whole hour that I have sat here and admired you as you drifted and dreamed away?”

I stood tall, tightening my abdominal muscles and dropping my chin to send him a sultry look from beneath my lashes. “Yes. The whole hour.”

He was still amused. “Because I thought I surprised you.”

“You did not.” I strode through the shallow water towards him.

“And I only got here ten minutes ago.” He was openly laughing at me now.

I didn’t care that he’d caught me out. I smiled back at him. I couldn’t help it. I loved to see him laugh.

I loved the way it made his beautiful dark eyes gleam. I loved the way his happiness wound around me, drew me in.

I came out of my lake, stepped easily up over the low bank that the willow—and Erik—sat upon, and slowed as I walked to him.

I wanted to rush.

I wanted to snatch him up, throw him to the ground and have my way at once. Cover his beloved face with kisses. Cover other parts of him with kisses. Have those laughing, rich-earth eyes look up into mine as the laughter faded and was replaced with passion.

But I would control myself. I was a master of this , at least, if not of Erik.

I closed the distance between us with all the seductive grace at my disposal, and eased between his legs. I touched his chin as he tilted his head back, and I kissed him softly, coaxingly.

He hummed, then pulled away and said, “No.”

“Mm?” I said, following his lips blindly. “What?”

He caught hold of my wrist and drew my hand out of his breeches.

I stared down at it. I didn’t recall putting it there.

I didn't recall putting Erik on his back, either, and yet he was sprawled over the wide willow trunk and I was arched over him, with one hand planted beside his head and the other, until he removed it, in his breeches.

I blinked.

When had I done all that?

How did he make me lose control so easily?

"Yes," I said on principle. "Oh, yes."

He sighed and pushed up to his elbows. "I should have waited at home," he complained to the sky. "Then—when you eventually realised I was here—you'd have come to find me, and we'd be doing this in comfort."

My Erik was not fond of making love outdoors. At least, not when it was cold.

Last year, we'd had some successful trysts in the meadow at the end of a long hot summer day, or on an unseasonably warm autumn morning. In general, though, Erik liked the privacy of his own home.

"I knew you were here," I insisted.

He didn't reply, but his smile grew.

I scowled and tugged him lower on the trunk, closer towards me until his thighs were spread around my hips and I could feel his heat sinking into my bare skin. "Very well. I did not know you were here. But I was thinking of you."

"You were?"



“Yes. I have done nothing but think of you since you left me.”

He reached up and held my sides. “I came home. I will always come home.”

“You had better,” I told him, pulling his shirt out of his breeches to expose his solid stomach. I rubbed an admiring hand over it, watching it hollow under my touch as he sucked in a sharp breath and enjoying the abrasion of the hair that began under his navel and led down to his lovely soft cock.

How strange, to think that when I first encountered his softness, it had confused and angered me. I still didn’t understand why he couldn’t get hard. I didn’t need to understand. It was a part of him, and so I loved it.

Whether he orgasmed or not—and he did not, at least not in a way I was used to—his pleasure was a thousand times more overwhelming than any of my former lovers, all of whom had come quickly beneath my touch, spilling over my hands, my belly, into my mouth.

Simply lying with Erik and pressing my body against his gave me more satisfaction and brightness than any youth spurting and wailing under my dutiful touch ever had.

“I have missed you,” I said, still caressing his stomach.

He watched me touch him, his eyes hot. “Oh, yes?”

I slipped my hand lower and caught his balls, squeezing gently. “Mhm.”

“I’m sure you found a way to entertain yourself in my absence.”

I cocked my head at the playful tone.

He was teasing me.

I released him and took hold of myself instead, putting a knee to the willow trunk and casting my shadow over him. “I did,” I said, working my hand the length of my shaft and moving my hips in gentle pulses. I hissed at the sensation. It was always so much more when Erik was with me.

He continued to hold onto my sides, his thumbs rubbing in gentle circles. “I suppose you kept busy swimming in your lake?”

The only place we touched was where he held me. One of his hands glided around to rest on my buttock as I rocked into my grip, slow and easy. His eyes tracked down to my abdomen.

He did love to watch my muscles work for him.

“Yes,” I said, and gasped. I wanted to say something else, something clever, but my thoughts grew hazy as my body clamoured to reach its peak.

“Took a few walks in the forest?” Erik said, still in that conversational tone.

“Hmm?” My hips were moving faster.

Erik’s smile flashed bright and strong beneath me. The hand that wasn’t on my buttock grazed up the length of my torso to rest over my heart, grazing over a nipple.

I moaned and flopped onto him.

He choked out a laugh, dragged my mouth to his for a firm kiss, then pushed my shoulders, easing me up and away. He ignored my noise of complaint. “Enough, Sayan. I want you home with me.”

“I want you now .”

“I want you now, too,” he said, “but I want you spread out beneath me on our bed, where I can spoil you.”

Spoil.

I shuddered at the word, and a prickling wave of delight rushed over my skin.

Erik loved to spoil me. I would take as much spoiling as he’d give me, and secretly want more and more and more.

I rubbed fretfully over him. “I don’t think I can wait.”

He pushed my hair back from my hot face, his expression fond and patient.

“But,” I said, heaving a sigh, “I will try.”

I pulled him quickly up to his feet, catching him when he stumbled. I took his hand, wove our fingers together, and drew him briskly along after me.

The walk to his cabin had never taken so long.

Erik's hand was warm in mine, his hold on me as firm as my hold on him. We talked as we walked through the forest, but I couldn't tell you what we spoke of; all my senses were attuned to him. To the warmth of his body beside me and to the sounds he made as he breathed, as he swallowed, as he moved at my side.

Where he belonged.

Sunlight filtered onto the track we'd worn over the last few months between the thick trees. It was quiet and hushed here. The sheltered air was warmer than down by my lake, and instead of water and rock, it smelled sweetly of pine. It felt heavy and intimate.

Twice, I had to stop and kiss him breathless before I could wrench myself away and resume the endless, everlasting walk.

The third time, Erik was the one to stop us.

He wasn't talking anymore, but he wasn't silent, either. His breath came fast and rough. I knew that it wasn't from our brisk pace. He was a fit man, used to walking many, many miles every day.

I sent him a sideways glance from under my lashes and found his eyes on my face. Our gazes clashed and locked.

“Fuck it,” Erik said in a low growl, and startled me by turning and pushing me up against a tree.

He leaned in, ducking to press a harsh, biting kiss to the centre of my chest. “I have missed you,” he said. “Gods. So much.”

“I have—oh.” My head fell back as he took hold of my shaft and gave it a demanding pull. “Erik,” I said. “Erik, I?—”

He kissed my neck as he continued to stroke me. He opened his mouth over my skin, caught my flesh in his teeth, and he sucked. Hard.

I made a needy, gasping sound as my buttocks clenched and I forced myself into his grip. He pressed his free hand flat against my stomach, told me to hold still for it, and set about driving me out of my mind.

I shuddered and trembled, trying to be good for him but I couldn’t help it, I couldn’t help it, my hips had to move and my muscles all tightened as I?—

I came disgracefully quickly and stood on shaky legs, panting loudly in the quiet of the forest around us.

Erik stared at me with possession and pride.

I almost came again, just from looking at him.

The rest of the walk home was a dazed blur. This, too, was something new that I’d experienced only with Erik.

I used to satisfy a lover, take my pleasure, and leave, content with a job well done but otherwise unmoved. With Erik, I felt something else entirely.

I'd asked him about it, once.

He'd said it was called an afterglow.

I liked the word. It fit.

I glowed after Erik had taken me, or I had taken him.

I radiated with warmth, with satisfaction and happiness. I had begun to understand—a little at least—Erik's obsession with warm fires and candles and his hot drinks in the cold times, and his seeking out of the bright sun in the warm times.

I glowed all the way home, soft and fuzzy-edged like a dandelion clock lit bright with the setting sun, and by the time my thoughts sharpened, we were already mounting the steps onto the porch of Erik's cabin.

I rushed him inside and slammed the door behind us, making him laugh when I curled over him and walked him backwards into the main room, my lips parting his.

"Now, now," I whispered into his mouth. "Let me have you now, my Erik."

He hooked an arm around my neck, smiling as he said, "Not yet, my Sayan."

I growled and fake-nipped at that smile, the one that told me he was in a mood to make me dance to his tune.

And I would, as I always did.

I squeezed him closer, making him groan. "It was a long journey to get here," he said, "and I haven't had the chance to freshen up yet. I came straight down to your lake to find you."

A flash of pride rippled through me. “You did?”

“Of course I did.” He cupped my cheek, looking almost sad. “You must know that you are precious to me.”

“Most precious?” I asked quickly.

“The most precious. Of all things and all people.”

“Including Lars?”

“Including Lars,” he said solemnly, though his lovely dark eyes gleamed with amusement.

I unbuttoned his coat, pushing his hands away when he went to do it himself. It was my delight to unwrap him.

I’d be even more delighted if he agreed to be naked for me at all times, but Erik was, after all, a human. He had strange human ideas about such things.

Usually, I liked to take my time. Not today.

Today, I found myself gasping and pulling at his clothes. Fabric ripped beneath my fingers, and Erik huffed out a sharp laugh when I yanked at his breeches, bouncing his hips off mine as I wrestled with the fastenings before whipping his breeches down his thighs.

I moaned, my hands going straight to his buttocks. I gave the heavy globes a firm squeeze, reminding myself to be gentle, gentle, but as soon as I felt the bare skin of his torso against mine, and that glorious rasp of hair that led down to his cock abrading my smooth navel, I pushed my fingers between his buttocks without

ceremony.

Erik yelped, his entrance tight and unyielding.

I rubbed apologetically over his hole, petting it and murmuring nonsense against his mouth, still hauling him into me, into me, into me .

“Oh,” I said, and spilled without warning over his stomach, my heart thundering, my legs trembling.

Erik held me through it and pressed a kiss to the side of my head when I curled over him and hunched down to tuck my face into the crook of his warm neck. I opened my mouth over his skin, taking in the taste of him. Salt, heat, male.

Mine.

I shuddered and spilled one last time.

Once, this would have mortified me.

Shocked, appalled, and mortified me. It wasn't a naiad's place to take his pleasure first—he must give and give and give, and only when he had earned it was he supposed to take his own.

So my mother had taught me, back on her island when I was young.

Erik taught me differently.

Pleasure between lovers, he said, was a thing to be shared, not apportioned and doled out. I was allowed to feel. I was allowed to seek and take joy in his body. He offered it to me freely. He wanted me to take joy in it.



He wanted me to be happy.

My mother had also wanted me to be happy—Erik had had a strange expression on his face when I'd told him that—but more than my happiness, she was concerned with my dominion over humans. With my survival.

If there was one thing I knew, it was how to survive. As for being happy?

I was learning.

Erik ran a firm hand over my long hair, all the way down my back to grip my buttock. He jiggled it playfully in his hand and I moaned into his neck, bumping my hips into his.

“Lay the fire for me,” he said, releasing me with a brisk pat, “and let me go and freshen up.”

I made a complaining noise and pressed closer, picking up his arms and wrapping them around me. While I was drawn to the fire and would doze in front of it for hours and hours, sprawled out on the rich autumn-coloured rug, I didn't care for laying it. It was a messy business.

I wasn't good at it.

I wasn't used to not being good at things.

But I had missed him fiercely and despite just having spilled over him, I needed to have him again.

I needed to be inside him. I needed his naked body against mine, to share heat and heartbeats. I needed to move in him and have him move with me, our limbs

entwining and bodies sliding. I needed...

“Sayan,” Erik said with a little nudge.

I released him abruptly and strode over to the hearth. Going to my knees, I thrust both hands into the log basket and scooped out some seasoned logs. Once I’d tossed them into the grate, I stretched up to grab the tinderbox from where it sat on the mantel and opened it carefully, as Erik had shown me. I struck the flint over and over, even managed to get some sparks, but the tinder wouldn’t catch.

I struck it again and again, tamping down my frustration. It was the fire I was supposed to light, I reminded myself. Not my temper.

I snarled with irritation when the tinder failed to catch once more, then stilled when Erik’s hand slid beneath my hair and rested on the back of my neck. My head drooped and I sighed, the tension in my muscles releasing in a delicious wave.

“Let me do it,” he said.

“I can do it,” I told him, stiffening back up. “I want to.”

I wasn’t a child . It had been an aeon since I had new skills to master, new ways to be, but I wanted to learn.

“All right.” Erik knelt beside me. “Shall I tell you what you’re doing wrong?”

“Yes, or we’ll be here until wint—” I broke off and stared at him.

He was naked.

Erik closed my open mouth with a forefinger. “I did say I was freshening up.”

“I thought...” I ran my hungry gaze all over him. “Clothes...” I skimmed the backs of my fingers down his side, watching his skin pebble with those little bumps that said he was cold.

I didn’t get them myself, and they fascinated me almost as much as the hair that grew on his chest, down to his groin, and dusted his arms and legs. I rubbed the pads of my fingers over the tiny bumps wonderingly.

Goosebumps, he called them.

They had nothing to do with geese.

Erik caught my wrist, his stomach hollowing on a sharp inhale.

My gaze flicked up to meet his and we stared at each other.

“You light it.” I thrust the tinderbox at him.

He struck it successfully the first time and lit a small taper before looking at the logs in the grate and sighing.

“Hold this.” He passed me the taper.

I watched the flame dance down the length of it, getting closer and closer to my fingers, as Erik swiftly rearranged the jumble of logs. He took the taper back and lit the fire.

I shifted impatiently on my knees as he waited for the fire to catch, adjusted a couple of logs, then turned to me with a smile.

It was the signal I had been waiting for.

I pushed him back and crawled over him, lowering my body to his until he was pinned beneath my dense weight. Humming with soul-deep satisfaction at the feel of him under me, I lowered my head to take his mouth in a long, soft kiss.

The earlier urgency to take him and re-stake my claim still beat through my blood but it had eased to a deep, steady throb rather than the jagged and desperate scatter of beats it had been before.

I held the side of Erik's neck and stroked a thumb along his jaw as I parted his lips with mine. He opened for me. Our tongues slid together tenderly and I purred with happiness.

Erik's amusement was evident in the short puff of air through his nose that struck my cheek. I soon put paid to that, curling my tongue over and around his in a way that drew a moan out of him. I flexed over him, settling my body heavily onto his, as if I was trying to fuse us together.

Erik's hands drifted into my hair. He held me to him as he pushed up and up into the kiss, and up some more until I gave way and he had enough room to turn us.

No matter how I tried to keep him beneath me, where I could keep him safe while I worked for our pleasure, eventually, Erik always turned us to put me on the bottom.

Sometimes we wrestled for it. Sometimes we ended up rolling slowly over and over the bed—or the floor—switching places until we were shaking and laughing.

But I liked to be beneath him.

I liked it so much.

Until Erik, I 'd had to keep a part of myself awake and aware while coupling. Someone had to look out for danger, after all.

When the world was younger, that meant watching for wild creatures. In the last thousand years, the danger had shifted from the wild to other humans. And yet when Erik was on top of me, against all sense, I didn't feel the need to be on guard. With Erik, I felt safe.

I trembled beneath him, my gaze fixed on his face.

He straddled my thighs, his shaft more than half hard. I ran a curled knuckled the length of it and he flashed me a smile. I enclosed him in my fist, feeling the weight and lovely heat of him, fascinated by the way he looked hard but his shaft had a gentle give to it.

I loved the way it lay in my palm.

I was built on the scale of the gods. My hand was larger than a human's, and I loved the way I could hide his little cock away there.

Erik had been less than pleased when I'd shared this with him. His human pride had entertained me greatly.

Now, he rocked his hips into my hand once or twice, but no more. I released his shaft and turned my attention to his balls. He liked me to touch him here. He liked me to suck him here. I licked my lips and gripped his waist, dragging him forwards and up.

Since I had previously always been on top this, too, was new for me. I wanted it all the time.

He wobbled and fell forwards, trying to catch his balance as I quickly scooted him up my body. I arranged him with his knees either side of my chest, his legs spread as wide as they could go, and leaned up to get my mouth on him.

“Oh gods,” he said when I took one heavy ball into my mouth and tongued it. His hips jerked, the muscles pulsing beneath my firm grip. “Ohhhh.”

I growled against him, pulling him closer, pulling him further onto me, and dug my fingers into his thighs when he said, “Wait, wait.”

I pulled off and craftily tilted him, scooting him closer so I could get my tongue?—

“Sayan,” Erik barked, folding at the waist and catching himself with a hand against the floorboards.

I tipped my head back and scowled up at him.

“I don’t want that today,” he said.

My scowl deepened, but I released him at once, dramatically letting my arms drop by my head, my fingers curled loosely.

He touched my cheek and pressed a quick kiss to my forehead. “I want you to do something else for me,” he said, his voice low.

Anything.

Anything, anything.

“I want you to take your own pleasure.” He moved backwards and then off me completely. I reached after him without meaning to. He caught my hand, kissing it as firmly and quickly as he’d kissed my forehead. “Do you know what I was thinking of the whole time I was in Hallevalt?”

“Lars ?” I said. I heard my moody tone. I didn’t care.

“I was thinking of you.” He grazed a hand down my side, from my collarbone to my hip. He flattened it over my stomach below my navel and pressed down. I shivered under the touch. His eyes heated. “I dreamed of you.”

I blinked at him then had to look away, oddly embarrassed at the thought. I didn’t look away for long. I couldn’t. “You dreamed of...me?”

I dreamed of Erik all the time, but I hadn’t thought...I hadn’t expected...I smiled up at him, a bright burst of emotion warming my chest.

“Oh, Sayan,” he murmured. “Of course I did. I love you.”

“I love you.” Instead of grabbing for him, I relaxed further onto the hard wooden floor. I surrendered all the tension in my muscles and stretched out before him.

His eyes flared with that look I adored—possessiveness and pride. And who would have thought that possessiveness, the one thing above all that naiads were supposed to flee from, would be one of my very favourite emotions? One I had begun to crave?

“What did you dream?” I asked him, my voice breathy and ridiculous and I didn’t care. I didn’t care .

“Well,” Erik said. “I had more than one dream.” He shifted to sit on the sofa, shivering in the cooler air away from the fire. I rolled onto my side and rested my

head in my hand, watching him go. “There was definitely a theme, though.”

I traced a slow hand down my chest to grasp my cock, circling it and displaying it for him. “This.”

“That was certainly involved,” he said, his voice rough. “But it wasn’t the theme.”

It wasn’t?

My confident smile faltered and I pushed up to kneeling.

“The theme,” Erik said, “was you being good for me.”

Oh. My confidence rushed back. “I am always good for you,” I said.

I was.

“You are,” he said at once. “But this will be quite difficult.”

I rolled my eyes even as I walked over on my knees to push my way between his legs. It was my favourite place to be. “I am sure that I can fulfil anything you can possibly want from me.” It was my naiad nature to do so. And, because this was Erik, it was my dearest, fiercest wish.

He laughed into my mouth—I couldn’t help but kiss him when he was this close, and I didn’t even wait until I’d finished speaking to do it—before threading his fingers through my hair and using it to pull my head back.

I gasped at the delicious sting and arched my throat.

He did not kiss it, even though it was perfectly presented for him.



“I dreamed of you lying there—” he laughed again as I immediately collapsed to the floor and sprawled out for him on his lovely rug, “—yes, like that. Just like that. You are so very beautiful, my love.”

“I know.” I made sure to angle myself so that the shadows cast by the dancing flames would accentuate my sculpted torso, delineating the muscles that Erik had spent hours exploring with his fingers, his tongue, his lips.

“And then what?” I prompted him as his gaze dragged hotly over me. “Did you want me to hold still while you ride me?”

I hadn’t yet managed it. I ended up flipping him and driving him beneath me as I neared climax, but I was confident that with another decade or two of practice, I would learn the patience to?—

“I am not going to touch you at all.”

I stared at him.

A log popped on the the fire.

I stared at him some more.

“What?” I said, my voice pitched quaveringly high.

“I told you it would be difficult.”

“Difficult. Not impossible .”

“It was just a dream, Sayan.”

Did he mean nightmare ? Because it sounded like one.

I glared up at the ceiling. “Tell me more,” I said bravely.

## Page 6

*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 1:17 pm*

6

The sofa creaked as Erik shifted on it. I cut him a sideways look but didn't meet his eyes.

"I dreamed," he said after a moment, "that you lay before me and you brought yourself to pleasure. For me."

I blinked at the ceiling, confused. "But why would you want that? Why wouldn't you want to touch me?"

Doubt clawed at me, but for a few queasy moments only. Though I didn't understand his human drives, I was as certain of Erik's love as I was of my lake.

"It will be hard not to," he said.

I arched a little, lifting my hips into the air in a subtle roll and loving the faint hitch of his breath.

"But," he continued, "I am very, very greedy when it comes to you. I have never seen such a beautiful man?—"

I moaned and lifted my hips again, aching for him.

"—and I almost never get to admire you."

That made no sense. "You see me all the time. Except when you leave me for Lars."

He suppressed a smile. “I see you very close up, Sayan,” he said.

I pondered this.

It was true. I was always on top of him. Or holding him to me. Holding him down. Curtaining us with my hair. Enclosing him in my arms...clutching him to me...drawing him in.

I covered my eyes with an arm and stroked my chest fretfully.

Within seconds Erik was there, kneeling beside me. I felt the rise of his heat over my sensitive skin before his touch landed. He laid a hand on my sternum and left it there, a steady, grounding weight.

Lifting my arm, I peeked under it at him.

He was watching me. “It was a dream,” he said. “An idle thought. That’s all.”

“I can do it.”

“Not if you don’t want to. Although...”

“Although what?” I flung my arm away from my face. My hand landed on his thigh and I gripped it absently.

“Although—” he brushed a lock of hair from my eyes, “—I think you will enjoy it.”

I wasn’t so sure.

“I think,” he said, “that you will like to see what you do to me.”

“I know what I do to you,” I said smugly.

I’d watched his pupils expand, his cheeks flush, and his chest begin to heave. I’d seen his stomach hollow, his thighs quiver, and his hands tremble.

I often displayed myself for him. I usually did it in my lake as I approached him, to draw his attention from the water birds, or the clouds, or whatever he’d been looking at before I’d arrived. The idea of dragging the moment on and on...of doing it here, in my land-home...of having all of his attention— all of it—on me and me alone...

“I want to do it,” I said.

Erik’s smile was slow. “If you’re sure. You don’t have to. As I said, it was just a dream.”

“Did you wake hard from this dream?” My face heated as my thoughtless words hung between us. I patted his little cock apologetically. “I meant wanting. Did you wake wanting?”

“I wasn’t sleeping.”

I quirked a brow at him.

He leaned over me and dropped a quick, biting kiss on my lips, then held my jaw to stop me from taking it further. “It was a daydream, Sayan.”

His meaning sank in. “It was deliberate.”

“Yes.”

A bubble of delight rose through me. “You were in your city, surrounded by your

friends and your human things, and you were thinking of me. Imagining me.”

“I was. I missed you.”

I hummed and stretched my body long, flexing every muscle then releasing them languidly, watching his face.

His cheeks darkened.

I pushed at his thigh. “Go and sit down.”

Erik did, grimacing when his knees cracked.

His body did things mine did not and he liked to grumble about them, complaining that he was getting old, though he was only forty-three.

His joints cracked.

Sometimes he got a cramp in his thigh or a stitch in his side in the middle of our love play, and we had to pause.

He’d said hesitantly once that he would age in our long life together. He’d said it as if I hadn’t known . He’d said that the silver in his hair would overtake the brown; that the creases and lines in his skin would deepen. That his muscles would soften.

“I know you will age,” I’d said when he’d finished, uneasy at his apologetic tone. “I, more than anyone, know what ageing looks like. What a life coming full circle looks like. I’ve seen it often enough.”

To me, locked in my immortality, it had always looked like magic.

I'd been lying with my head on his chest, and I'd tightened the arm I had wrapped around him, rubbing my face subtly over him. Cuddling, Erik called it. "I am excited for it."

He'd let out a puff of surprised laughter. "You're excited to watch me wither?"

I pressed a kiss to his warm skin. "To be there with you. To always be with you. To experience it with you."

Erik had lifted my face and looked down at me. "Will you age?"

I blinked. "Oh. No. I will of course remain young and beautiful until the day we die."

"Of course," he'd said dryly.

"As you will remain beautiful until the day we die."

His face had taken on that rueful look he sometimes got when I told him how much I loved his body. "The way you see me," he'd said with a small shake of his head, and kissed me.

I saw him truly. I didn't think he understood that. Maybe one day he would. I didn't have the words to explain it, in the same way I couldn't explain the bond to my lake. Instead of using words, I'd shown him.

I watched as Erik returned to his seat on the sofa and reclined against the cushions. He raised a brow at me.

Fixing my gaze on his, I turned onto my stomach and then lifted up onto my knees. I gathered my hair into a long rope and drew it over one shoulder, shivering when the weight of it whispered over my skin, which was already sensitised and thrumming

with energy.

Every part of my being craved sensation. I yearned for the hard push of dense muscle and the rasp of his hair-roughened skin over mine. For Erik, though, I could stave off the desperation—just a little longer.

“What did I do, in your daydream?” I asked him.

“Many things.” Erik’s voice was deep and soft. “Things that made you feel good. That made me feel good, watching you.”

I flattened a hand at the base of my collarbone and held it there for a moment, spreading my fingers wide. I tilted my chin to arch my throat a little, looking at Erik under my lashes, and dragged my hand down my chest. I brought my other hand up to join it and briefly stroked my pectoral muscles, digging my fingers in hard enough that he’d see the skin turn white around my fingertips. I hissed out a sharp breath between my teeth at the pressure.

I coasted my hands down my torso, lingering over every ridge and line of muscle until I held my shaft in one and cupped my balls in the other. Slowly, slowly, not looking away from him for a moment, I sank down from the high kneeling position to sit on my calves, all the while working myself gently. I was trying to hide it, but the muscles deep at my core were trembling, sending out little shocks and pulses of arousal.

I could do this, I affirmed to myself, and stiffened when Erik said in a husky voice, “Turn around.”

I hesitated before I complied, turning on my knees until my back was to him.

“Kneel up again,” he said.



I did, and shook out my hair so it cascaded down my back.

“No,” Erik said. “Move it away. I want to see.”

Oh. I pulled my hair over my shoulder, exposing the length of my back, my arse and my thighs to him. I slid my hands down my sides and around to hold my buttocks, lifting them gently.

Erik let out a shattered breath. “Yes,” he said. “Like that.”

I hummed and massaged my buttocks slowly, wishing Erik’s were the hands lifting and separating my cheeks, sliding a teasing finger in between, drifting down to grip my thighs.

I peeked over my shoulder. Erik’s eyes were fixed on my arse. I released it to take hold of my shaft, and pushed my hips into my fist and back, in and back, moving as fluidly as if I was in the water.

With Erik’s attention on me, the familiar sensation was tripled in intensity.

I fell forwards and caught myself on a hand. I didn’t stop moving into my fist, and then, suddenly, Erik was there, kneeling behind me.

I shuffled my knees apart to make room for him. I was shocked at how vulnerable it made me feel to have him there.

Excited by it.

His warmth soaked into me and the skin on my buttocks and thighs brushed his as I rocked and rocked. He laid a hand at the very base of my spine, pressing lightly and encouraging me to deepen the arch. Fingers tangled with mine as I stroked myself,

increasing the pressure and slowing the speed.

I softened and dropped to an elbow as he took control.

Erik leaned over me, giving me his weight. I shivered at the feel of his shaft slotting between my cheeks.

I had done this thousands of times. I had positioned many lovers on hands and knees, or if they preferred it, with their face in the grass and arse to the sky. I had never, not once, been in this position myself.

I'd always been the one behind.

My mind was confused but my body wasn't—I continued to do as he guided me, rolling languidly into our joined hands, rubbing back against him, my breathing turning slow and deep.

Erik was rolling too, his hips moving, pushing into the resilient bounce of my buttocks. His hand abruptly left my shaft and his heat abruptly left my back as he straightened his upper body to grip my hips—another position I was intimately familiar with from the other side.

I moaned quietly and sank down to both elbows. At Erik's urging, I eased all the way down until I was lying on my front. I smiled giddily as he settled on top and continued to thrust against me.

He wasn't hard, wasn't soft. He dragged over my arse as he opened his mouth over the nape of my neck, grazing his teeth lightly back and forth before kissing me there.

Braced with my arms either side of my face, I worked my hips, dragging the front of my body over the rug. I was going to make a mess of it and the coarse fibres would

soon begin to abrade the skin of my groin, but I couldn't stop.

This would, I thought, be better on the bed.

I blinked, realising that it was the first time I'd given any thought to how and where our lovemaking happened.

This must be why Erik fussed about not wanting to do it on the ground outside, on the fallen tree, in the water, on the lakeshore.

It was about comfort, yes, but more than that, it was about spinning out the moment between us.

Erik moved over me in slow, deep pulses, his breathing loud in my ear.

I licked my lips. "How is the view from there?" I asked teasingly. "Not too close?"

He stopped moving.

I made a noise of complaint. I was teasing, I didn't want him to stop!

"You make a very good point," he said, and slid off me. "I was supposed to be watching, wasn't I?"

I threw a hand back to grab him, but too late.

The sofa creaked again as he sat. I groaned and dropped my head, panting into the carpet. Spreading my legs wider, tipping my arse up, I shoved a hand beneath me and gripped myself. The position was not something I'd normally choose, but I liked the way it felt at the base of my spine. I liked the heat of Erik's attention on me.

Oh, how I liked it.

I sighed and flexed my hips, pushing into my fist, letting my arse rise and fall just a fraction slower than I normally would, because I knew that was what Erik wanted.

“Sayan,” Erik said roughly.

“Mmm.” The noise that came out of me in response was involuntary, but once I made it I couldn’t seem to stop.

I spread my legs wider, thinking that he must be able to see everything now, and continued to pump into my hand.

I continued to do it slowly, steadily, adding an extra twist at the top of every push.

“Is this what you wanted to see?” I asked him.

“Yes.”

“I could do this for hours,” I warned him. “I could get lost in it.”

“Do you touch yourself often?”

“No. I don’t know. Perhaps. What is often? I used to do it when I was lonely. Oh. Ohhh.”

As soon as I’d said the word lonely , Erik was with me again. “You are not alone,” he told me, closing a firm hand over the back of my neck. “You will never be alone again, not as long as I live.”

“Or after you die,” I reminded him.

Sometimes the things Erik said made me think he didn't know what was waiting for us on the other side. Humans had the most peculiar ideas about death.

"Never, if it is in my power," he said, lifting my chin and turning my face to his. He leaned down and kissed me. It strained my neck and pushed me off balance. I went with it, rolling slowly to my back.

"I'm sorry," Erik said. "This wasn't a good idea. I don't know what I was thinking."

"You wanted to admire me," I reminded him, sliding my hands down my sides then laying one on his thigh where he knelt, rubbing it up to his stomach and back down.

"I can admire you perfectly well from here."

"I do not mind it."

"That," he said with a smile, "is not good enough."

The breath froze in my lungs and I felt my eyes widen with dismay.

"For me," he added quickly. "That is not good enough for me . I want you to love it."

"Oh." I lowered my lashes. "I...I like it. A bit. I like your eyes on me. I like the attention."

"A bit?" He was stroking up and down my ribs, pausing at the hard ridge of muscle above my hips and gripping it every now and then as my hips continued to fidget.

"A lot," I confessed. "I like you looking at me. Wanting me. Knowing that you can have me, whenever."

Erik smiled but it wasn't his usual smile of fondness or humour. It was a slow, dark thing as his eyes locked with mine.

“Well, then,” he said. “Perhaps you should continue.” He stretched an arm over my lower body and braced on the other side, containing me.

## Page 7

*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 1:17 pm*

7

I touched myself. My shaft was so hard it stood up and lay against my belly. I ran two fingers up and down the length of it, barely grazing it with my fingertips.

Erik's dark eyes stayed on my face.

It puzzled me when he did that. There I was, long and lean and beautiful, laid out before him on his rug and touching myself as sensuously as I knew how, and instead of focusing on what I was doing, he was focusing on my face, my eyes. On what I was feeling.

No one had ever looked at me as Erik did.

Everyone else had looked exactly where I wanted—and expected—they to.

I moaned quietly and flexed up into my hand, knowing that my muscles would clench and relax in a beautiful, supple wave. I was damp with a light sheen of perspiration now; that wave of movement would catch the flickering light of the fire, just as the waves of my lake caught the sun, dazzling and alluring.

Erik's nostrils flared and his breath roughened.

He still didn't look away from my face.

I did it again and again, exaggerating the move, trying to draw his attention lower. With my other hand I touched my parted lips, my neck, my chest. The pleasure was

building and I found it oddly difficult to maintain eye contact. My lids fluttered closed. “Look at me,” I whispered without thinking, even as my eyes closed fully. “Look at me, look at me.”

“I am looking at you, sweetheart.” Erik’s hand covered mine as I was stroking my chest, rested lightly on the back of it as I drifted it all the way up my neck, along my jaw, and back to my mouth. “I am looking at you.”

I slipped my hand from beneath his even as I turned my head and caught two of his fingers between my teeth.

I blinked my heavy lids open and gazed up into his beautiful brown eyes. He slid his fingers over my tongue. Closing my lips, I sucked softly and twisted a little against the floor in satisfaction.

I made a demanding noise that Erik interpreted correctly as a request to watch me. He dragged his hot eyes from my face down the length of my body and back up. My hips kicked hard into my hand.

“Yes,” he said. “Like that.”

He looked down again, as I wanted him to, and I watched the side of his face intently as I rocked up into my hand, rolling my body faster and faster until Erik leaned over me, set his mouth to the tip of my cock when it popped through the top of my fist, and licked.

I cried out and came, spilling copiously. Before I’d even finished, Erik climbed on top of me and held me. I buried my face in his neck and panted against his skin, biting and licking at him frantically.

He hushed me, running a soothing hand up and down my ribs. I bent a leg to press it into him, and then without thought, rolled us over to pin him beneath me. His arms



came around me, one hand resting on the nape of my neck and the other curved over my arse.

“You,” he said, squeezing my nape and attempting to ease me away, “are perfect.”

I moaned happily and snuggled into him.

He let out a wheezing laugh, even as he tried to pull me away again. I grunted in dissent but he squeezed all the more firmly. Sighing, I lifted away and blinked the dampness from my lashes, giving him a challenging look.

He seemed surprised but only for a second; his face softened.

I was pouting, I knew it. My lips felt hot and swollen. I licked at them.

Erik didn't say anything, though, for which I was grateful. This new part of me that I'd never even guessed at before I'd met Erik loved to expose itself for him. To roll around in his attention, like a summer bee drunk on nectar, to demand more and more and more of it.

But the part of me that was all I'd known for thousands of years still sometimes tightened up at the vulnerability, and locked my emotions like ice skimming over my lake. It usually happened after moments like this.

Erik brushed my hair away from my face and then held me steady, doing nothing but returning my gaze. I looked away first, softening over him.

He wheezed again as my weight pushed the air out of his human lungs. I eased myself off him reluctantly then shuffled backwards to straddle him.

Tucking his arms behind his head, Erik smiled up at me. “That was quite the welcome home,” he said.

“Better than Lars ’ welcome home?”

Erik cocked a brow. “Yes,” he said slowly. “But Lars doesn’t welcome me home. He can’t. My home is here. My home is with you.”

His words flooded me with warmth. “And he isn’t as beautiful,” I said.

Erik pretended to consider it. “Many people think Lars is an exceptionally handsome man. He certainly gets more than his fair share of attention.”

I scowled.

“But never from me,” Erik said. “We have never been lovers, Sayan. We’re not like that. We never have been. We’re close, yes, and he is physically affectionate, but you are my only lover.”

I knew it as surely as I knew the currents of my lake, and the turn of the seasons.

I still liked to hear it.

I needed to.

Erik pushed me back and off him, and stood. I remained on my knees, gazing up at him, as he slid his fingers beneath my chin and raised my face to his. “You know what you mean to me, don’t you?” he said softly.

“Yes.”

He tucked a piece of hair behind my ear, tracing the pointed tip of it as he liked to do. I shivered. “So why are you jealous of Lars?”

I shuffled on my knees with discomfort, and lifted my chin from his hand. “How

could I possibly be jealous of a human?"

"Because I love him."

I gasped in outrage, even as Erik stepped closer, caught my face between his palms, and leaned down to say against my mouth, "But it is a different love from the love I have for you. It is the bond of family. Of truest friendship. The love I feel for you, my dearest heart..." He kissed me deeply. "It cannot be measured. It is yours, and yours alone. I cherish you above all things."

I ran my hands up his calves to grip the backs of his thighs.

"I will tell you that as often as you need me to." He smiled into our kiss. "One day, perhaps, you will believe me."

"I believe you now."

"In that case, I suppose there is no need?—"

"But you may tell me. Often. I have no objection."

"Do you not?" he murmured.

"No." I rose high on my knees, winding my arms around him. "You can tell me every day."

"Then I shall."

I stared up at him. "You may do it more than once a day. If you like."

He smiled and kissed me, murmuring against my eager mouth, "Then I shall."

~ END ~