



Sacrifice to the Moon

Chapter 1: A Small Sacrifice

Stepping into the room was nerve wracking, but Kris took a deep breath and bolstered his courage. The wolf mages were dark and mysterious and very, very dangerous, but the kingdom needed their help. Their emissary had to be treated with the greatest respect.

What he really didn't expect was to end up flat against the door the moment he closed it. There was an arm across his throat and a face a mere inch from his own. He could barely breathe.

"You are not what I asked for," the mage all but snarled at him, blue eyes boring into his own.

Kris had seen the mage once from a distance when he arrived and it seemed the mage had also seen him.

"You asked for a male," he said as well as he could manage with an arm to his throat.

That produced a snort of a laugh from the other man and the pressure on

his neck released a little.

"Run back to your chambers, Princeling, I should have known your underlings would misunderstand me."

Then Kris found himself released and the mage was backing off. He had been dismissed, he could see that, since the mage turned his back and walked further into the chambers. The man was tall, much taller than Kris, and he was decked out in the blackest leather. The mage was also much younger than he had expected, not much older than he was.

Mothers frightened their children with stories that the wolf mages would come and take them away to be brought up to the ways of the wolf, but most of the mages who came out of the mountains were much older than this one. He seemed more than a little different.

It was said that wolf mages did not feel the elements like normal human beings and Kris could believe it when he looked at the man in front of him. The mage was only wearing pants and a sleeveless frock coat that fell open at the front. The chambers were warm from the roaring fire, but the man had arrived like that and it was not the season for such little clothing.

"They did not misunderstand," Kris said, covering his nerves with what little bravado he could muster; "I know what you require."

The mage turned back to him at that, pinning him down with those expressive eyes.

"You are innocent," was the surprising reply, "you have no idea what I require."

Kris felt his cheeks heat up. He didn't know how the mage knew he was untouched, but it made no difference, he did understand what the man wanted. Just because he had no experience didn't mean he was ignorant of the principle.

"Sex," he said, since there was no point in beating around the bush, "you require sex. I would never ask one of my people to do something I was not willing to do."

That earned him an arched eyebrow.

"And your father knows you are here?" It was said with sarcasm.

"My father is in the war room," Kris replied, refusing to back down, "planning tomorrow's battle. I have read about your people. If you are to be at your strongest to help us you must transform into your wolf shape tonight and to do that you need energy. The energy is greater the purer the giver isn't it. I am the first son, when my brother was born I was dedicated to the Goddess. I have been training for the priesthood, I have never even kissed another."

Their kingdom had always been a pious one. It was traditional that if the king had two sons the older would train to take vows and become the head of the church in the kingdom when his brother took the throne. The elder child was the greater gift and hence the greater sacrifice to the Goddess. Kris had been dedicated to their deity as a toddler and he had been educated all his life to take his rightful place.

It had never felt quite right.

When he had seen the mage and heard from the servants what the mage had requested, he had realised where his destiny truly lay. It was as if his path had finally become clear. This was how he could best serve his kingdom and his people.

"You are dedicated to the Mistress?"

Kris nodded. 'The Mistress' was what the wolf mages called one aspect of the Goddess. She was night and day, dark and light, moon and sun and the wolf mages worshiped her luna face. It was her dark gift that made them so powerful.

"Come here," the mage said, the whip of command in his voice.

Kris' legs were moving before his brain even caught up and he came to a halt just in front of the other man.

"Strip!"

It was definitely not a request and Kris was not used to being ordered around, but he swallowed his pride. His people needed his sacrifice. They were outnumbered by invaders from the East, their only chance was the power of the mages.

The first thing he went to do was remove the pendant he always wore and

he pulled it out from under his clothes. It was the symbol of his calling.

"Wait," the mage said as Kris went to lift the chain over his head.

He stopped immediately.

"You are still Hers, leave that on."

Kris wasn't really sure it was proper. Priests were celibate and holy and wearing a symbol of that seemed wrong, but the last thing he wanted to do was anger the mage, so he did as he was told. The mage's eyes never left him as he stripped each of his garments off and there was nothing innocent about the gaze on his body. He blushed and the more clothes he removed the hotter his skin felt as blue eyes tracked over it. When he was finally naked he just stood there not sure what to do next.

"You would have been wasted in the priesthood," the mage said and, to his surprise, turned and walked away from him.

He was standing there clothed only as the Goddess intended and the mage didn't even seem to be interested all of a sudden. For a few seconds he felt rather insulted. When that intense gaze hit him again though, it made his throat tighten and his skin tingle. The mage languidly arranged himself on the bed, just looking at him and Kris had to employ all his years of praying silently in the temple not to fidget.

For a little while the mage just watched him and he thought he might even be getting a hold of his blushing, until the mage moved. The moment the man shifted position Kris felt his face and neck heating up all over again, because the light caught the very distinct bulge in the mage's pants. The leather laces actually looked as if they were straining to burst.

Kris tried to swallow, but his mouth had gone completely dry. It was dawning on him that he was very much out of his depth.

His eyes seemed to be fixated no matter how he tried to fight it and he felt his heartbeat speeding up as the mage, ever so slowly, released the knot. He had been trained all through puberty to ignore all things sexual, but it was absolutely impossible to ignore that. His body reacted without his consent as the mage loosened the laces eyelet by eyelet and he finally figured out why he'd so easily been able to pass the tests when it came to females. His teachers had never thought to test his resolve with males. As the mage lazily pushed the leather down a little way, Kris felt all the blood

draining away from his head.

The cock, nestled in a patch of curly hair, was fascinating and just a little bit intimidating even only half erect. The fact that the mage's hair down there was a different colour to that on his head made Kris flick his eyes up once, but he was hooked like a fish on a line and it didn't last long. When the mage reached out and very deliberately stroked himself, Kris kind of forgot about anything else. He had never been in the presence of anything so sexual and his body was making up for lost time.

"At least you're interested."

He managed to make his brain work just a little at those words and forced his eyes back to the mage's face.

"Last chance to leave, Princeling."

"Kris," he replied with a shake of his head.

There was protocol for dealing with mages and protocol for dealing with princes, but Kris didn't care about any of it anymore.

"Come here, Princ..." the mage paused and looked at him, "Kris," the man corrected himself.

For a second or two he didn't move, but then the mage patted the bed and he forced his legs into motion. The moment he did he was uncomfortably aware that he was fully erect as his cock bobbed gently. It was ridiculous; he seemed to have no control over his body at all.

"Now," the mage said as Kris sat down, "I am going to demonstrate what I want you to do with that pretty mouth of yours. Move up the bed."

Kris did as he was told, feeling self conscious all the way. He knew about sex in theory, but very vague theory and he honestly didn't know what the mage was talking about. His whole life had been about avoiding temptation and now he had walked straight into it.

"What..?" A look from the mage silenced him.

"Watch, feel and learn," was his only instruction and then the mage lowered his head.

His caught up with what the mage was going to do about a second before the man did it and then his brain short circuited, so he didn't have any time to worry about it. All he could think about was warm, wet heat as it slid over his cock and he moaned without the smallest thought to propriety. He was absolutely sure that nothing had ever felt like that before and his body hummed with every sensation. At one level he knew he was supposed to be paying attention and learning, but all he could do was feel.

The wonderful heat and heaviness in his lower regions just kept growing and growing. Even clutching the bed cover in a death grip didn't help him control himself and when the mage employed tongue as well, Kris just lost it. His whole body seemed to explode from the inside out and he made some breathless gasping noises and then he was shaking all over. The mage never stopped sucking and Kris felt as if he was being sucked dry. He really couldn't stop the whimpers that came out of his mouth.

When the mage finally pulled off with a soft pop Kris thought he was just about to lose his mind. He managed to peer at the man who had reduced him to completely nonverbal and blink in a very dazed manner. The one thing he did notice was that the mage's eyes were glowing softly.

"I've never tasted anyone like you before."

"Mage," Kris said softly, because he figured he was supposed to reciprocate, but he really couldn't move.

"Adam," the man said and smiled at him in a way that Kris didn't know how to interpret, "my name is Adam."

For a few moments Kris just looked at Adam, taking in the beautiful face and incredibly expressive eyes, and he couldn't really think. The light blue glow gave Adam's features a sharp ethereal air and Kris found himself breathless for reasons other than the physical exertion. He did not know this man, could not even begin to understand Adam, but he felt something inside him stirring that was nothing to do with the sex.

He'd never felt a connection with another human being in the way he felt to Adam at that moment.

The way he reacted was more instinct than actually thinking about what he was doing and he sat up, leaned forward and captured Adam's mouth in a kiss. He had seen couples kiss of course, but he really didn't know what it was supposed to be like and Adam's lips were much softer than he had

expected. Adam's mouth moved against his in a slow rhythm and Adam's arms came around him and Kris was overcome with the desire to never stop what they were doing.

When Adam's tongue flicked lightly over his lips, he was a little surprised; he didn't think he'd ever seen anyone do that. It felt good, though, so he tried it himself and the moment he parted his lips, Adam's tongue was diving between them. He tasted something musky and salty and belatedly realised that it had to be his seed still in the mage's mouth. Some part of him tried to be disgusted, but the fire in his belly roared into even greater life and he sucked on Adam's tongue.

As Adam moaned and kissed him harder, Kris opened himself up to the whole experience. By the time Adam finally drew away, an age later, Kris was breathless and becoming aroused again, even though his whole body still felt over sensitised.

"Kristopher," Adam said, smiling again, "you are most unexpected."

Something about his full name from Adam's mouth made him tremble inside. It sounded so sultry and no one had ever said his name like that before. Kris wanted to hear it again and again and he felt as if he wouldn't mind waiting forever to do so.

Then Adam's smile became more of a smirk and the moment was shattered.

"Are you a quick study?"

There was a challenge in Adam's voice and Kris felt his male pride begin to rise, especially when Adam gave a very unsubtle glance down at his own groin.

"Very quick," he replied, dragging together his scattered wits.

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"Do wolves like to be bitten?"

He smiled as he asked the question, pushing himself into a role he had

never before played. Leaning over Adam, he lowered his head and nipped gently at the muscles of Adam's chest. His knowledge of sex was very limited; he was only supposed to know the bare facts of what to put where between a man and a woman just in case he was ever required to produce an heir. Other than that it was strictly forbidden for anyone to mention such carnal things to him. He had, however, overheard one of the soldiers talking about a night he had had with a woman. It had involved biting, at least the part he had heard had before he had almost been caught eavesdropping. He had overheard a few other things in his time, but that was what came to him at that moment.

Adam made what Kris thought was a happy noise at his initiative, so he did it again and then, on impulse, licked a stripe over one of Adam's pink nipples. The moan was louder when he did that, so he decided to combine both things he had learned.

"Holy fuck!" Adam said loudly as Kris nibbled on the mage's nipple.

Kris lifted his head quickly, just to make sure he hadn't done something wrong. The last thing he wanted to do was screw everything up. Adam was looking at him with slightly startled, but heavily lidded eyes.

"You," Adam said and then smiled, "are a natural."

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Kris liked having Adam's attention on him. In fact he liked it a lot more than he could have guessed. It wasn't the fact he had never been allowed this before either; it was more than that. Yes the elicit nature of what he was doing did cause skitters of excitement in his chest, but that was only part of it. Adam seemed to call to part of him he had not known existed.

Bending down again, he tried out what he had learned some more, noting Adam's reactions at every stage. He lavished attention on one nipple and then the other, eyes flicking every now and then to the healthy erection poking out of Adam's pants. He knew what his target was, but he was still enjoying getting there.

Adam's fingers were laced through his hair and Adam was not trying to direct what he was doing, but he still felt the odd twitch in a southerly direction. Smiling to himself, he began to work his way down the other man's chest.

It took him a little while, because the way Adam's muscles twitched under his touch was kind of fascinating, but eventually he did make it all the way down. He found himself just staring for a little while. Adam's cock was long and thick and was glistening with moisture on the end. When he licked his lips Adam gave an almost inaudible moan and Kris looked up at his lover through his eyelashes.

"I did not think it was your intention to try and kill me," Adam said and it was Kris' turn to feel just a little smug.

Once he set his mind to something, nothing could dissuade Kris and he opened his mouth and slid his lips over Adam's large member. The taste was definitely unusual and not quite the same as what he had tasted when he kissed Adam, but he kind of like it. It fired off thoughts and feelings in him that were new and exciting. The way Adam groaned, not even close to inaudible this time, but loud and very much appreciative, didn't hurt either. He had one simple reaction; this was good, so very, very good.

He didn't want to mess it all up, so he took his time. He tested to see what Adam liked and what Adam really liked, because as far as he could tell there wasn't really anything Adam disliked. Two things he learned pretty quickly was that his gag reflex was very much working and Adam kind of melted if Kris used his tongue just so on the underside of the head. Both were useful pieces of information, but the second was much more fun.

The fact that he wasn't as good at this as Adam was glaringly obvious, but he hoped enthusiasm counted for something. His mother had always told him he did everything with his whole heart and soul and in this case he definitely wanted to excel.

His jaw began to ache as time went on, but the way Adam's fingers were tightening in his hair and the rather explicit phrases that were falling from Adam's lips gave him a clue he was getting there. When Adam finally stiffened and made a valiant effort of not bucking those very powerful hips, it was a little bit of a surprise, but Kris was ready. He felt warm liquid hit the back of his throat and he swallowed automatically. The taste was far more intense than the refection he had tried from Adam's lips and it just seemed to reinforce everything he was experiencing. It screamed 'Adam! Adam! Adam!' at him and he could almost feel the magic the sex was causing.

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Climbing back up Adam's body, Kris held himself above the other man and waited. When Adam's eyes opened this time, the glow in them was even stronger. Feeling brave, Kris bent down and kissed Adam and Adam met him move for move. A small voice at the back of Kris' brain told him he wasn't really supposed to be enjoying this. He had come to Adam to do his duty, to save his people, but it was not turning out to be a chore at all.

"Pile up those pillows," Adam told him when they finally broke apart and the wolf mage extracted himself and stood up.

Kris couldn't help watching Adam move, it was kind of hypnotising in its sensuality, but when Adam raised an eyebrow at him he began to do as he had been asked. By the time he looked back at the wolf mage, Adam was naked and Kris just kind of stopped. In leather Adam had been impressive, naked he was even more so which disconnected Kris' thoughts for him.

"Oh," he said, feeling heat and desire rush all over his body.

He had seen other men naked before; the deacons and priests all ritually washed together at the beginning of the day, but none of them had looked like Adam. There were scars running all the way down Adam's left leg, but they did not diminish and rather added to the sum of the man. In the yellow lamp light Adam's skin was pale and golden and viewing the mage as a whole made Kris' mouth hang open just a little.

"Like what you see?"

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Kris looked at the pile of pillows he had so carefully made and then back at Adam and felt his embarrassment rise to incredible levels. It sounded so humiliating. The only time his bare ass had ever been in the air was when he had been beaten for disobeying the rules. As he stared Adam's smile became softer and Adam moved towards him, kneeling on the bed.

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"Do..." He coughed as his voice failed him the first time. "Don't stop."

Adam placed a kiss on his shoulder.

"Trust me."

Part of Kris' mind, the tiny part still functioning, was surprised to find that he did, indeed, trust Adam.

Adam placed a swathe of kisses down his back and then he felt hands on his buttocks. It drew another tremble from him. Adam's strong hands gently kneaded his ass and very carefully spread him.

"Oh," he said in surprise when warm breath ghosted over his hole. "Oh," he added louder when that breath was swapped for a swipe of tongue. "By all that is holy," was what he said when the tongue returned and flicked back and forth.

So many sensations fired through his body and he tried to have so many reactions that all he managed in the end was a moan of pure pleasure. Adam's hands were firm and that tongue just would not leave him alone and Kris felt his muscles beginning to turn to water. It was so intimate and so completely different to just about his whole life that it took him out of himself. When Adam began to push against his hole with that seemingly powerful tongue, deliberately trying to breach him, he whined and to his mortification found himself pushing backwards.

"Eager is good," Adam told him, breaking away for a moment, "eager is very good."

When Adam returned to what he had been doing, Kris moaned even louder as Adam's tongue pushed as deep as possible.

It took him a little while to realise that Adam's tongue was actually breaching him and it was way too long for a human tongue. The hands that were holding him were still human, which meant another of the legends was true. Wolf mages could shift parts of their body at will.

That knowledge just sent Kris' mind into spirals and he was pretty sure he lost a significant amount of time as Adam opened him with his tongue. By

the time Adam eventually drew back, Kris was a panting wreck and he barely registered as strange the fact that a small pot flew off the bedside table. He was so far gone that he just accepted what he saw.

"You were born for sex, Kristopher."

He was absolutely sure his father would not agree, but Kris was not about to argue. His skin was damp with sweat and the need curling around his belly was almost overwhelming. When Adam's hands touched him this time Adam's fingers were slick with something and Kris moaned as one was pushed ever so slowly into his body. Adam had done such a good job with that amazing tongue already that Kris felt himself opening up easily and one finger quickly became two.

Two burned a little and he involuntarily tensed.

"Relax, Kris," Adam said quietly, "just relax."

Kris did his best and Adam played him carefully, slowly opening him more and more. It felt like, well, it felt like nothing Kris could describe from his limited experiences and by then his embarrassment was completely forgotten. Adam could have employed the royal portrait painter to capture the moment for all Kris cared. All he wanted was more.

Then Adam brushed over a place inside him and he was pretty sure little lights exploded behind his eyes. Something that was probably a curse came out of his mouth at the same time, but he blamed that totally on Adam, since he could not be held responsible for anything just about then.

"Please," he begged, although he really wasn't sure what he was begging for.

He was so hard that his cock was aching, but he didn't want to find release yet. It was so much more than simply wanting that.

"Soon," Adam promised, "be patient."

Kris was feeling anything but patient. When Adam introduced another finger, he pushed back, impaling himself on Adam's fingers as quickly as possible. It burned as he was stretched, but it felt so damn good. He didn't care if he was acting like a cheap whore, or what his actions said about him, all he knew was he needed.

Adam refused to give in, however, and kept working him open slowly, every now and then rubbing over that spot inside that made everything so much more intense. When Adam finally pulled back, Kris was pretty sure he was ready to die if he didn't get what he needed.

Adam's large hands took hold of his hips.

"Lift yourself up onto all fours," Adam told him and he scrambled to obey.

His arms were not happy about taking his weight, but he locked them and forced his body to comply.

"Relax and breathe," was Adam's next instruction; "this will hurt at first; you will need to adjust."

Kris didn't care; he wanted Adam in him now.

One hand left his hip and then he felt the head of Adam's cock bumping against his hole. The first push was nothing; his body began to open to take in Adam, but then he was truly breached and he found out what Adam had meant. He grunted as his muscles screamed and tried to clamp down and Adam stilled immediately.

"Breathe, Kristopher."

He tried, but it hurt and his body was urging him to try and expel the very large intrusion. One of Adam's hands rubbed circles on his back while he tried to make his body cooperate. It was a lot harder than he had imagined it would be, but he was never one to be beaten. Bit by bit he forced his muscles to relax again and when he felt he was ready he pushed back very carefully.

It hurt again almost straight away, but not with the same intensity and when Adam took over, slowly pushing into him further he found he could take it. There was a deep burn and an unrelenting ache, but as Adam carefully took him it was manageable.

The whole thing seemed to take forever as Adam treated him as if he might break. Pulling out and then pushing back in felt like an age, but Kris could feel his body adjusting with every move. He was honestly amazed at Adam's control.

Bit by bit Adam's movements increased in force and pace. It was as if

Adam could judge perfectly what Kris could and could not take and Kris just bowed to Adam's experience. The burn was still there, the ache was still there, but the more Adam thrust into him, the better it felt and Kris forgot everything except what he was experiencing. It had nothing to do with duty now and all to do with pure desire.

Eventually Adam filled him up with every thrust, brushing over that place that sent rivulets of fire down his spine each time. Kris had to let out what he was feeling somehow and he had never realised what kind of debauched noises he was capable of making. Everything was building up and up in his body and it kind of felt like when Adam had sucked his cock, but so much more intense.

His orgasm actually took him by surprise and rocked him from head to toe when it finally hit. One second he was reaching for the zenith and the next he was tumbling over the top of it without really knowing what happened in between. Adam just gripped his hips more firmly and kept thrusting as he gasped and shook and cursed in a way that would have seen him thrashed within an inch of his life had any of the temple priests heard him. He couldn't help it; his nerves were raw, his body was shaking and it took everything he had not to fall forward.

All the way through Adam had been quiet apart from the spoken instructions, but not anymore. Now Adam made noise, lots of needy, greedy sounds and Kris felt himself coming apart even more. The intimacy, the knowledge that he was causing Adam to lose control all but broke him. He came again, even though he had nothing left to give, because it was the only way his body could react to the overload.

When Adam finally came, body shuddering into his and a litany of words that Kris didn't understand falling from those amazing lips, Kris really did feel the power shift through him. It was incredible and breathtaking and he collapsed on the bed, face first, as his muscles completely failed. Adam had his hips in a vice like grip, so he couldn't fall completely, but he was totally unable to move of his own volition.

It slowly dawned on him that Adam seemed to be shaking and then suddenly Adam was wrenching away from him. There was no pain as Adam rapidly pulled out, but it wasn't overly comfortable and Kris grunted as he collapsed onto his side. He could just see Adam as the mage staggered away from the bed.

Adam's eyes were tight shut, but he could see the now bright blue light

shining from underneath the lids.

"So much," he heard Adam whisper and then he saw the most amazing thing.

Falling to his knees, Adam put himself on all fours and his body began to flow from man to beast.

Kris simply watched in awe. This was something very few people were ever permitted to see. It was something sacred and Kris could not take his eyes off Adam as man became wolf in a matter of seconds. What was really eerie was that Adam's face was contorted with pain, but Adam never made a sound. Only when there was a beautiful wolf standing there did Adam make a noise as the mage sat down with a huff. Kris realised he was holding his breath.

Blue eyes still alight with blue flame looked up at him and then he couldn't help himself. He pushed himself off the mattress and all but fell off the bed as his limbs failed to hold him. Some deep buried part of his mind forced him on and demanded that he touch what he could see. He half walked, half crawled to where Adam was sitting and slid his fingers through the wolf's soft coat.

Adam was like no wolf he had ever seen. Most of Adam's pelt was black, but it was highlighted with deep auburn and it almost seemed to glitter.

"I have never ..." Kris tried to express what he was feeling, how incredible he felt about everything that had happened, but he just didn't have the words.

When Adam bumped him on the chest with that big black head, Kris fell back onto the rug on the stone floor. There was no strength in him to stop it and all he could do was lay there as Adam stood over him. He had seen wolves at a distance on some of his trips to the outer temples during the summer, but he'd never seen one as big as Adam. It only occurred to him as Adam snuffled at his chest and then further down, that some people might have been afraid at this point. Kris just thought it tickled and he squirmed a little.

Of course he was completely unprepared for Adam's next little trick and when Adam set about cleaning him up with a very long, wolfy tongue, Kris all but tried to crawl away. It was way too much sensation too soon, but Adam was very much determined. A paw came to rest on his chest,

pinning him down, as Adam licked him clean of all traces of their previous activities.

Kris was pretty sure he came again while Adam very thoroughly cleaned him, but he thought that should have been physically impossible and he was so high on sex by then he couldn't be sure.

~*~

Kris blarily opened his eyes. He was exhausted, but the feeling in the room drew him to consciousness. The first thing he realised was that he was on the bed and he was covered with soft blankets, but he didn't remember how he had ended up there. Adam was not on the bed with him, but it didn't take him long to find his lover.

The mage was kneeling in the centre of the room on the cold stone floor, still naked and there was a woman standing in front of him. She was petite and had bright red hair like none Kris had ever seen.

"Adam, Adam, Adam," the woman said in a voice that was deeper and huskier than Kris would have expected, "what have you done?"

Adam remained silent, but came slowly to his feet as the woman urged him up with fingers under his chin.

"You have taken one of mine for your own, Adam," the woman said and Kris finally realised what he was seeing, "and without asking."

There were legends of the Goddess visiting those she favoured, but he had never believed it.

"You are a very naughty boy. I would have liked a please."

Adam's head rose at that and his eyes lifted from the floor, but instead of striking him down for insolence, the Goddess smiled at him.

"You are lucky I love you best or I might have had to punish you."

"He called to me," Adam replied voice quiet and reverent and then he looked over directly at Kris, "and he would not leave when given the chance."

That was not said reverently at all and Kris blushed and buried his face in

the blankets when the Goddess also looked in his direction. He did not know how to deal with a deity who was actually right there. He'd spent many hours prostrated before her image in the temple during his training, but he wasn't sure what to do in her presence.

"Ah, my wild one," he heard the Goddess say and risked lifting his eyes just a little.

She was gently cupping the side of Adam's face with her hand.

"I have been waiting for this day," she said and her eyes caught Kris' before he could look down again. "Come here, Kristopher."

He had no idea what the protocol of greeting a Goddess naked was, but Adam was naked, so he just went along with it. Climbing out from under the blankets, he walked over and stopped beside Adam, eyes on the floor.

"Look at me, Child," the Goddess said, so he slowly lifted his gaze and she smiled at him.

Her face was so young and mischievous, but he could see the weight of millennia in her eyes.

"I have much planned for you two," she told him and then moved her gaze to Adam. "There is a darkness coming to these lands and you will both guard against it."

When the Goddess took his hand, Kris gasped, because he could feel her power just below the surface. In that instant he knew she could have wiped him from existence with a thought. It was humbling to behold. He only just registered when she put his hand into Adam's.

"If there was time I would let you come to know each other naturally, but the danger is too close."

The Goddess left their hands joined and then placed the fingers of her right hand gently on his forehead and those of her left on Adam's. Almost instantly his mind was full of images.

He saw a young boy with red hair and freckles and a pendant just like his being dragged away from his parents. He saw the boy being forced to sing to weave magic for a sorcerer and when he failed being whipped. Always the left leg because it stopped him being able to escape, but meant he

could still move around when necessary. The calculation behind the wilful torture appalled Kris.

Then Kris saw the boy, older by a few years, but still no more than eleven or twelve, throw a spell back at his master and run. The boy's mind was full of a beautiful woman's voice singing to him and calling him and he disappeared into the mountains. He walked through rain and snow, over bare rock and through forests, only stopping to sleep and eat what he could find. The boy barely had enough clothes to cover himself, but as he walked he changed. He did not become weaker, but stronger and his hair went from red to black as he tracked through wilderness. By the time the boy found the fortress of the wolf mages he was taller and stronger and he walked through the gates with his head held high.

Then the images seemed to speed up, flashing through Kris' mind so fast he couldn't take them in, but could only feel them. What he felt was the sense of a man who was gentle at his core, but wild and free on the outside. Adam was fierce and protective of those he loved and incredibly aware of his duty. Adam was everything Kris had always admired with a touch of spice.

Kris felt dizzy when the images stopped and it took him a moment to blink and come back to himself, then he looked at Adam.

"You sing," he said, which he knew was utterly ridiculous and irrelevant, but it was what popped into his head.

"So do you," was Adam's equally ridiculous reply.

Adam appeared as dazed as he was and Kris could only assume Adam had been shown his life in the way he had been shown Adam's. As one they turned back to look at the Goddess.

"You are both mine," she told them with a gentle smile, "and from now on you are each other's as well. This I declare, so shall it be."

"So shall it be," Kris heard himself say without even thinking about it.

He felt something click, something that was not physical and he felt complete. The something not right he had always sensed, that had dimmed to almost nothing when he had first seen Adam, totally disappeared. Everything was now how it should be.

He looked at Adam again, feeling wonderment at how perfect the moment felt and it lasted a goodly time. It was only as he realised he was being rude to a deity that he snapped out of it and looked back at the Goddess. She smiled at him, her eyes loving and gentle.

"Kristopher," she said, gaze locked with his own, "will you accept me as your Mistress, will you take my power?"

Kris heard Adam gasp quietly beside him.

"Yes," he said, the reply coming straight from his heart.

This time she stepped right up to him and pulled him to her in a close embrace. His head rested on her shoulder and he felt incredibly small, even though she was even shorter than he was.

"Open your soul, Kristopher," she whispered into his ear, "and be reborn."

The power that flooded into him took his mind away. He could not think, he could not move and he could not even breathe. For moments that seemed like hours he was trapped in flame that consumed and remade him. It was not really painful, because it went so far beyond the physical that the two could not be compared, but it was terrible. For what seemed like the longest time he thought he might die or simply cease to exist and then it was over.

He was no longer standing under his own power. The Mistress was holding him firm in her arms with a strength belied by her physical form. Adam was there almost instantly, helping him to stand up, but his legs felt so weak and he had to cling on to the other man. It was nice to be in Adam's arms, but Kris really wanted the room to stop spinning.

"How do you feel?"

Adam's voice was gentle and concerned and Kris did his best to put his thoughts back together.

"Strange," was the best he could come up with.

"Rest a moment and you will begin to feel better."

He nodded and held on to Adam as his strength slowly returned.

"You may feel weak from time to time as the power becomes one with you," his Mistress' calm tones made him concentrate again, "and when the moon is next full you will embrace your true nature for the first time. Adam will look after you."

Kris had no trouble believing that with the way Adam was holding him.

"When is the darkness coming?" he asked, standing himself up and away from Adam a little while still remaining in his lover's arms.

He had accepted his new destiny for a reason and he needed to know what that was.

"It is already here," the Mistress said simply, "it is within Ridian ranks and is the cause of this war. It wishes all my peoples to destroy each other to open the way for its evil plans. Your first task must be to bring sanity back to these lands."

Stepping forward she once again placed her hands to each of their foreheads and Kris' mind was filled with images. He saw demons and death and a pious man being possessed and when it was over he understood why they had to act.

"We should go to the war room," he said, looking up into Adam's face.

"At dawn," Adam replied and looked to the window where the night was still deeply dark; "that is when I was to join your father. You need rest and we need to form a strategy."

It was all very sensible, but Kris' thoughts were spinning with what he had seen. His instinct was to run straight to his father.

"A plan," he said, forcing himself to think rationally, "we need a plan."

Adam nodded and then they both turned back to where the Mistress was standing, only she wasn't there anymore.

"Look after him, Adam," her voice said from nowhere, "he is special, and allow him to look after you."

Then her presence was gone and Kris felt somewhat bereft.

"Does She visit often?" he asked, needing to say something to distract

him from what he was feeling.

"She has always visited me," Adam replied, pulling Kris a little closer, "sometimes like this, sometimes in dreams. She is," Adam paused and looked him directly in the eyes, "was," he corrected himself, "my only reason to be."

Kris let himself be led back to bed as he considered the profoundness of that statement. It didn't frighten him, because he felt the truth of it in his own heart, in fact it made him feel very good. His whole life was now different, his whole being, but it felt just about perfect. As Adam pulled the blankets up over both of them, he found himself snuggling into Adam's side as if it was the most natural thing in the world.

"The wolf makes you one with Her."

It wasn't a question, but he voiced what he was thinking as he puzzled out everything he had just been through.

"Her and all things natural," Adam replied, stroking his arm gently. "That is where the magic comes from. When you have changed I will show you."

It wasn't a full explanation, but it was enough for the moment and Kris nodded in agreement. He had so much to learn. Of course they had other things to worry about first.

Sacrifice to the Moon Chapter 2: Life of Sacrifice

Kris had only ever set foot in the war room for the sparse instruction he had had to make sure he had some idea of what he was doing if his brother Daniel died. The fact that there was a full session of councillors going on intimidated him a little, but he opened the door and walked in. Of course all eyes turned towards him and he was very glad of Adam's presence behind him.

They had talked for a long time, planning out what they needed to do and then they had dozed. At dawn Kris had taken Adam to the bath house and they had prepared themselves for the day and now it was time for action.

"This battle must be stopped," he said before anyone could challenge him for entering.

"Kristopher, what are you doing here?" his father demanded.

"What I was born to do," he said, walking further into the room.

He had stayed out of everything to do with this side of ruling the kingdom all of his life. All he had been allowed was a basic understanding of how it all worked, but that part of his life was over.

"Go back to your temple, Brother," Daniel said, clearly annoyed with him, "we have a battle to plan."

"It must not go ahead," Kris repeated firmly.

"The Radians have invaded our territory and claimed it as their own," Daniel replied in a scathing tone, "we cannot back down from such an affront. Our neighbours would assume us weak."

Of course Kris knew why they were going to war, but that didn't change what had to be.

"And we will be weak when the real enemy comes if we go to war with those who should be our allies."

He did not plan on being subtle about it.

"Krist..."

His father put a hand up and silenced Daniel before their discussion could degrade into an argument.

"Explain exactly what you mean, Kristopher," were the very serious instructions.

"There are enemies coming from across the sea," he said, meeting his father's eyes; "enemies who wish to see our way of life, our beliefs, destroyed. They are the cause of this war. They have infiltrated King Lythgoe's court. This war is to weaken us all and make us vulnerable."

He saw his father's gaze flick from him to Adam and then back again.

"How do you know this?"

"She told me, Father."

That caused muttering around the room and his father's eyes slipped to Adam again.

"You had a vision, Your Highness?" one of his father's councillors asked.

"Not a vision..."

"Then what are you talking about?" That was from Daniel.

"She was not a vision, Daniel, she was as solid as you or I."

Several of the faces looking at him clearly thought he had lost it now.

"She touched me here," he said and put his fingers to his forehead, "and she showed me what is to come. We must be united."

There was doubt in his father's eyes and Kris felt the frustration welling up within him. He wanted to show them, but he didn't know how and he growled in aggravation. Heat shot through his body from his feet to his head and his knees went weak, totally taking him by surprise. Luckily for him, Adam was standing right there and a strong arm slipped around his waist, pulling him close and holding him up.

"Breathe, Kris," Adam told him gently, "it will pass."

"You," Daniel accused, "you have caused this."

"What have you done to my son?" Kris looked up when his father asked that.

Surprisingly Adam laughed.

"You overestimate my powers, Sire," Adam said, still holding Kris close, "I do not have the ability to do this. Only the Mistress can bestow the gift she has given Kristopher."

Kris patted Adam's hand and gently pushed himself away from the wolf mage to stand on his own two feet. He still felt less than stable, but he could not just rely on Adam. He was about to speak when Sarver, the head of the temple garrison came around the table to stand in front of him. Those in the service of the Goddess usually stayed out of military affairs, but the garrison and the garrison commander were the exception.

"What have you done?" Sarver asked him, although from the man's eyes Kris could tell the commander already knew.

"I changed places with the boy they were going to send to the mage," Kris said simply.

"Unclean," Sarver hissed before he could even explain himself.

He was wearing his pendant on the outside of his clothes today, because it felt right and Sarver reached for it. It was a symbol of purity and piety and he knew exactly what Sarver was going to do. However, as the man's hand connected with it he felt power rush through him and a familiar presence filled his mind. Sarver pulled back his hand as if burnt.

"Leave him!"

The voice that came out of his mouth was powerful and very much not his own.

"He is my disciple and my child, hear him."

Then She was gone and Kris found himself being held by Adam again. Sarver was standing there with his head bowed, looking afraid. It was not what Kris wanted at all. He and Sarver had always been friends and Sarver had only been acting on the rule of law. Reaching out, he placed a hand on Sarver's shoulder, making the other man look up.

"We must be united in her service," he said simply, looking into the soldier's eyes.

For a few moments Sarver still appeared afraid, but then the man's features cleared and he nodded. Then Kris turned his attention to his father who was looking at him with astonishment.

"Father, we must find a way to expose the traitors within King Lythgoe's court. This battle must not happen."

His father indicated the table and the battle plan on it and Kris stepped forward with Adam at his side.

~*~

Kris could not help feeling just a little excited as he adjusted his official robes. They had hashed out a plan in the early hours and then sent a rider to King Lythgoe's camp to request a meeting on neutral ground. Theirs and all the neighbouring kingdoms were ancient powers, there were forms to their warfare and Kris had no doubt the meeting would be held. His role was to pretend to be what he had been and act as the Goddess' representative in his father's party.

"Will I do?" he asked, looking away from the mirror and over to where Adam was watching him.

"Personally I prefer you with fewer clothes," was the dry response, "but I suppose there might be some fun in peeling you out of all those layers."

Kris blushed. The ceremonial robes of a deacon were very heavy and ornate, but under Adam's gaze he felt kind of naked.

"Do you ever think of anything else?"

He had seen just how clever and practical Adam could be in the war room, but he had to find something to say.

"It seems," Adam said, dragging those fantastic blue eyes from Kris' feet to his head in a very obvious fashion, "that when it comes to you, no, I don't."

His heartbeat thumped in his ears for a moment and Kris really wished they were not about to go into battle. Adam wasn't wearing many clothes, just the pants and frock coat from the previous evening, but Kris wanted to remove them quite directly. Then Adam blinked and broke the moment.

"We should return to the King before one of us becomes too distracted."

Kris nodded; it seemed like a very sensible idea.

It was as they stepped into the hallway and Adam's hand somehow managed to find his butt through all the robes that he caught sight of Daniel. His brother took one look at him, scowled and then turned to walk in the opposite direction. That caused a wrench in Kris' heart. He and Daniel had never been close, but they had always been friendly.

"Wait here," he told Adam as all thoughts of lighter things fled from his mind, "I'll just be a moment."

Then he started after his brother.

"Daniel," he called, trotting to catch up the other man.

Daniel halted, but reluctantly, and Kris could tell his brother's back was so stiff you could have beaten metal on it.

"Daniel, what's ..." He stopped speaking as Daniel rounded on him, glare in full force. "What's wrong?" he managed to ask as he recovered from his shock.

For a few seconds Daniel just continued to glare at him and he was about to speak again when Daniel finally opened his mouth: "What happens to me?"

Kris frowned; he didn't understand.

"When?"

"When they make you king like the priest-kings of old?"

That completely floored Kris and he stood there with his mouth open.

"I don't want to be king."

He didn't; it was the complete truth. Not only had he not been trained properly like Daniel had, he was pretty sure he'd make a terrible king. He was too soft.

"Of course you don't," Daniel spat back at him, "that's why you lorded it over everyone in the war room."

He saw real fear in his brother's eyes before Daniel turned and went to walk away. Kris reached out quickly and took his brother's arm.

"Daniel," he said, making his brother turn back to him, "I do not want to be king."

"Then why did you go to the mage?" Daniel all but demanded. "Why did you meddle in affairs that don't concern you?"

"Because it is my destiny," Kris replied as earnestly as he knew how. "I

have never felt I was doing what I was supposed to do, and it had nothing to do with not being king. When I saw Adam I knew, I felt in my soul what I was supposed to do. There is darkness coming, Daniel, and it is my destiny to stop it with Adam. It is your destiny to one day be king. You will make a much better king than I ever would."

For the first time Daniel stopped looking angry and just appeared confused.

"I heard them whispering," Daniel said with much less ire and volume, "they're talking about you like the legends of old."

"Well they can stop that right now," he replied firmly, "because I have no designs on kingship. I would make a really bad king."

He was adamant and he willed his brother to see that.

"Daniel," he said as sincerely as he knew how, "father needs us both. If we fight among ourselves how can we hope to unite all the kingdoms of this land to face the enemy that is coming?"

For a while they just stood there and finally Daniel nodded.

"You are right, forgive me?"

Kris did not need asking twice, he held out his arm and Daniel grasped it. Before Daniel could object he pulled his brother towards him for a quick hug.

"By the Goddess you are strong," Daniel said, eyes slightly shocked as Kris released him.

"It is the wolf coming through."

Kris turned and found Adam standing only a few feet behind him.

"We should go," Adam said simply and Kris agreed with a nod, because it was far easier than having this particular conversation.

~*~

Riding through the troops all eyes were on their small party and it was clear the men did not understand what was going on. Kris had never felt

so on display. He sat up as straight as he could on his horse, riding behind his father and brother and next to Adam.

The Radians had agreed to the talks, but with strict boundaries. There were to be only six in each party and the neutral ground was the middle of the battlefield between each army's lines. The other two in their party were Sarver and General Jackson. Sarver carried the King's standard, half covered in a white cloth to signal the temporary truce.

The ride across the field felt like the longest of Kris' life as they spread into a single line and approached the party from the other side. King Lythgoe was sitting proud on his horse, decked out in the traditional armour of the Ridian kings. Beside him was his son Simon and the only other member of the party Kris recognised was Prior Gokey. The different kingdoms worshiped the Goddess in their own way, but they all recognised that their deity was the same one. Kris had met Gokey at a meeting of clerics several years previously.

"Is the wolf mage supposed to intimidate us?" That was from Prince Simon.

"The Mistress does not wish this conflict to take place," Adam spoke before anyone else could, "I am here only to protect Prince Kristopher."

That turned many eyes to him, so Kris just inclined his head at the other nobles. It wasn't quite a lie and it worked for their purposes.

"You wished to talk," King Lythgoe said coldly, turning his attention back to Kris' father, "so talk."

King Neil urged his horse forward so that he was in front of the rest of them.

"We have received information which confirms that this battle has been orchestrated by our enemies, spreading lies on both sides."

"What lies?"

"We have reports that your army has destroyed villages, tortured those who will not join you."

Both King Lythgoe and his son looked appalled at that idea.

"We have freed our people," Prince Simon said angrily, "whom you have been repressing since the treaty fifty years ago."

Kris had known the Radians would not have mobilised for war for no reason and now it was in the open. The lands to the east of the capital had once been Ridian territory, but there had been another war. In the peace settlement those lands had come under Kris' grandfather's rule.

"We have not needed a military presence in the low lands for forty five years," Kris heard his father say. "You have been fed lies."

"We know about your secret police." That was from Gokey and seemed to make the man sad.

"We have no secret police!" Daniel responded, clearly insulted.

"Enough!"

King Lythgoe was clearly not in the mood for arguing.

"There are enemies coming," Neil said, appealing to the other monarch. "We must not weaken ourselves with a pointless war."

"So you say," Lythgoe said, face locked in a firm expression of coldness, "but what proof do you offer?"

There was nothing to say to that since there was no physical proof.

"So be it," Lythgoe said with finality, "this discussion is over."

It wasn't exactly an unexpected result.

"Your Majesty," Kris spoke up for the first time before King Lythgoe could turn his party away, "I know you do not believe my father, but may I request a private moment of Prior Gokey's time before you leave. As Her servants we are aware of things we may not share, but if there is any way to avoid this bloodshed we must take it."

King Lythgoe looked at his right hand man and Gokey nodded.

"A few minutes more will not change the battle," was Lythgoe's response.

Kris nodded over to one side and urged his horse out of line. Gokey did

the same, but the man beside the prior put his hand out to block the way when Adam moved his horse as well.

"I cannot leave my charge," Adam said before he could be challenged; "you have my oath that unless Prior Gokey endangers Prince Kristopher I will not move against him."

No wolf mage had ever broken an oath; their word was their bond and Gokey gently pushed the other man's arm out of the way. Kris halted his horse twenty yards or so from the main party and waited for Gokey to do the same. He could feel the calm presence of Adam behind him.

"I do not believe there is anything we can say to change the mind of our kings," Gokey said, a sad expression on his face.

Kris urged his horse right up beside the prior so they were all but sitting next to each other.

"We can only try," he said, reaching out and placing his hand on Gokey's chest next to the symbol of the Goddess the man wore; "She does not wish this to happen."

The prior smiled at him as if at a child. The Radians did not believe in cloistered clerics, their priests were knights as well as men of religion and he could tell Gokey thought he was naïve. It was exactly what Kris wanted the other man to think.

"She does not meddle in earthly affairs," Gokey said in a very condescending tone, "she cannot stop this war."

Kris felt Adam's hand settle on the base of his back.

"That is why she asked us to do it for her," Kris said and looked Gokey directly in the eye. "Leave this man, beast of darkness; show yourself."

As he spoke Adam's power lanced into him and up his arm, straight into Gokey. The prior's eyes instantly turned black and his head went back in a silent scream. There were sounds of protest and weapons being drawn, but Kris ignored it all, his focus entirely on Gokey. The Mistress' vision had shown them who the spider in the web was. Gokey had been under the power of the enemy for months, ever since he had been accosted and possessed on a trip to his summer retreat. The prior had set up all the misinformation and set the Radians against their neighbours and Kris

knew that the only way to stop it was to reveal the demon.

Adam's magic was incredibly strong and it raced through him, using his body as a conduit. It took his breath away and called to the fledgling power also inside of him. The plan was to allow Adam to work through him, but he realised his own magic did not wish to stay passive. He was not yet one with it, but he could not stop it mixing with Adam's.

"Release him, Demon!" he bellowed, voice echoing across the field as his own magic leapt into the fray.

It started as a small dark cloud above Gokey's face and Kris heard all sounds around them stop. Everyone could see it. As Kris and Adam poured purifying magic into the prior it forced the demon out. It was a dark thing; it could not stand against the light of their power and the cloud grew. The cloud floated there, huge and black until the very last trace of evil was pushed from Gokey's body and then it fell to the side as Gokey fell into Kris' arms.

The cloud became solid and flowed into roughly the shape of a man, but with claws and spines and a tail. Its skin was black and red and it looked at Kris with yellow eyes that tried to spread darkness into his soul.

"Be gone," he said, voice still firm and commanding as he stared it down. "We are prepared for you; you will not catch us sleeping."

The demon hissed at him.

"You will fall," it said, voice raspy and almost inhuman, "all kingdoms fall."

"Not this one," he replied and held out his hand.

He had given it a chance to leave, now he chased it away. Power leapt out of him again, but this time it was all his and it hit the demon square on. It screamed and vanished. He felt it go, it was not dead, and he knew his message would be delivered.

Turning to look at Adam, he felt strangely satisfied and he had just enough time to open his mouth to say something before everything went black.

~*~

"You are an imbecile."

Not really the words Kris wanted to wake up to, but then Adam kissed him, so he figured he wasn't really in trouble. It dawned on him shortly after that, that he was in Adam's room, in Adam's bed and they were both naked. When he had passed out he hadn't expected to wake up like this.

"What time is it?"

"Coming on to evening," Adam told him and kissed him gently below the ear.

"What happened after I passed out?"

He was doing his best not to be distracted by what Adam was doing, but it was very hard. His body was responding already.

"A truce was declared," Adam told him, sounding not overly interested and working down his neck. "Gokey was only too eager to explain everything that had happened and everything he had done while possessed. They were well on their way to peace when I had you brought up here. I told the servants we needed to be naked so I could stabilise your magic, but actually, I just wanted to be able to molest you in your sleep."

Kris moaned, because the idea of Adam with full access to his body did nothing to curb his arousal. If Adam wasn't worried about the political situation than neither was he, because Adam was a very focused individual. Had there still been danger, Adam would have been dealing with it.

"Going to tell me what you did to me while I was innocently unconscious?" he asked, gasping just a little as Adam nipped at his shoulder.

"So many things," Adam said, voice playful, but heavy with desire, "I think it would be better if I showed you."

The idea of arguing with that was the furthest thing from Kris' mind. He put his head back and gave a fully fledged moan when Adam attacked one of his nipples. He was definitely and completely not going to object. Then someone knocked on the door.

"Dang!"

"Fuck!"

Adam seemed very direct in his expression of displeasure.

"Mage Adam," a voice came from the other side of the door, "the Queen sent me to check if you would like some food sent up."

Kris' stomach gave a very traitorous growl at the mention of food. It seemed more than one baser instinct was in play and Adam shook his head and grinned as Kris tried not to be too embarrassed.

"Sex later then," Adam decided with a quiet laugh. "Thank you," Adam called out to the servant behind the door, "and the prince is finally awake, so please bring enough for two. Plenty of meat for the prince, please, he is going to need it."

The way Adam leered at Kris was nothing like his serious tone.

"Very well, My Lord," the servant replied and Kris heard the man turn and walk away.

"We should get out of bed and find some clothes," he said as he realised that Adam was all but pinning him to the bed; "he'll be back soon."

"We should."

Adam didn't move.

"Well?" Kris asked and bucked his hips a little to shift the weight on top of him.

That was a mistake, because it brought his erection into direct contact with Adam's skin.

"We have a little while," Adam replied and then pushed against him, rubbing their bodies together.

Kris had neither the will nor the want to object and went back to moaning as Adam began kissing again. Adam had a very clever tongue and incredibly skilled lips and with a touch of teeth employed every now and then, Kris began to forget about anything else. He reacted to Adam on all

levels and there was no room in his head for practical thoughts.

When there was a second knock at the door he groaned long and loud in disappointment, not caring if the person on the other side of the door heard or not.

"I'll get it," Adam said with a grin and left him in bed, slipping out from under the covers and pulling on a robe.

"Good evening," Kris heard and was suddenly scrabbling for the sheets and blankets and covering himself up to his neck.

"Mother!"

The last person he had expected to see in the doorway was the queen.

"I hope you don't mind, Mage Adam," Queen Kim said with her usual gentle smile, "but I have a mother's need to check on my son."

"Of course not, Your Majesty," Adam replied with a small bow, "please come in."

Kris was just a little bit mortified.

"Your colour is looking much better this evening, Kristopher," his mother said as she swept into the room.

Kris was pretty sure he couldn't get much pinker.

"I'm feeling much better thank you, Mother," he said, trying to maintain just a little dignity.

Three servants with huge trays followed the queen into the room and began arranging them on the table near the fireplace. Adam appeared amused and Kris tried not to die of embarrassment.

"I thought I might take dinner with both of you if you are not busy," his mother said and he wanted to curl up and disappear.

From the look in the queen's eyes she was fully aware of what she had interrupted.

"Neil and Daniel are entertaining Lythgoe and Simon and I fear it may

degenerate into old war stories very shortly," his mother continued, talking as if nothing was out of the ordinary at all.

"We would be delighted with your company, Your Majesty," Adam said smoothly and offered her a chair.

While his mother's back was turned as she busied herself with walking over to Adam, Kris slipped out of the bed and grabbed the other robe that had been laid out next to it. He was pretty sure he had never put on any item of clothing so fast in his life.

Adam washed his hands in the bowl of water on the side and then set about pouring them all wine from the pitcher on the table. Kris covered his embarrassment by following suit and accepting the goblet Adam passed him.

"It looks as if the kitchens have outdone themselves," he said, looking over the food.

"Everyone is just so glad not to be at war," his mother replied with a smile; "the head cook is celebrating. Of course there will be an official banquet in a few days to mark the occasion. Will you be staying, Mage Adam?"

The way his mother looked at Adam, Kris knew this was what she was really here for. Kim had never been a woman to beat around the bush. She was known in the Goddess' kingdoms as being the most formidable queen and right hand to her husband. It wasn't often Kris had a chance to witness why.

"I will be staying as long as Kristopher will have me," Adam replied, not even remotely trying to duck the question.

Those words made Kris' heart speed up, even though he already knew their sentiment in his heart. To hear it out loud made him feel warm and happy. It was when his mother looked back at him that he realised he had a sappy smile on his face.

"We are joined before the Mistress, Mother," he said, realising that the queen was waiting for an explanation. "Only death will separate us."

"Not even that," he heard Adam say very quietly.

In the need to stop the battle there had been no chance to explain

everything that had happened. Kris found that it gave him great joy to do so.

"Well this will just not do!"

He took a step back when his mother stood up; he had no idea what she was about to do. That was really not the reaction he had hoped for.

"We shall have to organise a wedding immediately."

His mother grabbed his hand and pushed him into one of the chairs.

"The people need a chance to celebrate when one of the royal family is joined in wedlock. You'll look splendid in," his mother looked at Adam and then at Kris, "cream."

Kris wasn't quite sure whether to laugh or cry, especially when he saw the vaguely panicked look on Adam's face.

"Hmmm, this could work out very nicely. We'll put the banquet off until the end of next week, plenty of time to send out invitations, and then we can celebrate both things at the same time. It will take people's minds off all the tensions from this new enemy on the horizon. Adam, please feel free to call me Kim or Mother, you're part of the family now."

This was what a snowball felt like rolling down hill, Kris was sure.

~*~

Kris had always been the son distant from the public eye. His calling had been to train in the temple and only appear with his family on the feast days of the Goddess. The people all knew him by sight, but it was Daniel who was the heir and Daniel everyone always talked about. That was what made the new attention so much of a shock. It seemed everyone wanted to see him and talk to him and shake his hand. He'd taken to hiding behind Adam whenever he could.

His mother was as good as her word; she'd had most of the wedding organised before the end of the day after the halted battle. Daniel had taken to laughing at him as he was dragged all over the place for fittings and things, so he'd taken revenge and suggested to his mother that Daniel needed a new outfit for the occasion as well. It was kind of fun to do the whole sibling rivalry thing without this huge divide between them

anymore.

Adam, for his part, seemed to love the whole clothes part. The idea of a possible ally had quickly been dispelled from Kris' head when Adam had started talking about fabrics with his mother at the very first fitting. Wolf mages were supposed to be all leather and muscle with no idea what lace or taffeta were, but it seemed Adam had a hidden side. The tailor had almost wet himself with joy when the queen had suggested that a certain fabric would look better inlaid with gold thread and Adam had waved his hand and it suddenly had been.

Kris had had no idea magic would be used for such things.

The dark brooding Adam Kris had first met, or rather, first been pinned to a door by, seemed to be completely buried. From all that the Mistress had shown him, Kris knew there were two sides to Adam, the warrior and just the man, but the wedding preparations underlined just how different they were.

They had had to go and see the Arch Bishop as well, since the man would be doing the ceremony. It was a little awkward, what with Kris having thrown away all the grooming for the man's job, but it hadn't been too bad. Not until the Bishop had suggested that it might be better if they slept in separate rooms until the wedding, just to make everything look proper. Adam had actually growled at the Bishop for that and the suggestion had been quickly swept under the carpet.

Every night they retired to their room and every time Kris thought he was too tired for anything except sleep, what with all the preparations and the magic still settling through his body. Every single evening, Adam proved him wrong. Kris was a little amazed he could walk most mornings.

That was why, two nights before the wedding, Kris was a little surprised when Adam pushed him onto the bed on his stomach, opened him as thoroughly as ever and then stilled as soon as he'd pushed in. It wasn't that it wasn't good, it was that Kris wanted so much more.

"Adam," he whined, trying to push up his hips and encourage his lover to move.

"Calm, Kris," Adam said gently.

Adam kissed him gently on the back, but continued to hold him still.

"Feel the magic running through you. Tonight is the full moon."

Kris had been so busy with everything else that he had totally forgotten what day it was. He had felt the magic building up, becoming more insistent, but it had not occurred to him why.

"I..."

"Ssh," Adam told him, stroking along his back, "just feel. When the moon rises we will change together, I will lead you through it."

That brought a little tinge of fear to Kris' thoughts. Of course he had known this was coming, but now it was here and it seemed like so much more than everything that had gone before. He was going to become something other than human and it scared him.

"Her power is amazing, Kris," Adam whispered, as if reading his mind. "to be of nature, of the wild."

Kris had felt that power running through him, had experienced its touch, but now he was to become one with it. The thought seemed almost too big for his mind as he did his best to do as Adam said and calm himself.

Adam never stopped touching him and kissing him, caressing him gently as they remained intimately joined. Kris tried to focus on that, rather than the ideas that wanted to run around his head with insane speed. This was what was supposed to happen, this was amazing and good, his fear was misplaced. It was a mantra he tried to believe completely as he placed his thoughts and his faith with Adam.

He had no idea how long it was to moon rise. Adam had dragged him away to their room earlier than usual, so he suspected it would not be long. Kris tried not to worry about it, focusing only on Adam's presence and soothing touches. Time didn't really have any meaning as he waited, becoming more and more conscious of Adam as the moments passed.

When it came, the pressure started in his chest and spread out through his whole body and he gasped. He was so completely aware of Adam within him now, that when Adam moved it made him lose all breath in his body. Somehow, Kris had no idea how, Adam hauled him into a kneeling position, still impaling him, their energies moving together. It was so sudden, so shocking that he had no time to worry.

"Seek her power, Kristopher. Let it become one with you, allow it to dictate your form."

And Kris could feel it. In every muscle and fibre of his being he could feel it. It felt as if it was trying to destroy him, to explode each part of his body from his blood to his brain. His instinct was to fight it.

"Come with me, My Love," Adam's voice was gentle and coaxing and it cut through Kris' fear.

He felt Adam beginning to change, on a physical and a magical level. The magic in him began to swirl, calling to the magic in Adam and he let his resistance die. It was not easy and definitely not gentle, but as he opened himself the magic began to pop through his body. It was like a fire throwing sparks and it was just as dangerous as leaving fine silk near the flames, only, in this case, the silk was his flesh. He burned.

This was power in its truest form. Destructive and terrible and awesome. It ripped through Kris as if he was nothing but paper.

He tried to scream, but no sound would pass from his throat as his body exploded with power and burst its human form. It couldn't have taken long; he remembered seeing Adam change, but when time was measured in bones snapping, muscles changing shape and sinews stretching into new and agonising positions, it did not matter the length in real time. It was agony after mind blowing agony and it took away everything else.

He feared he might go mad, but throughout everything there was always Adam. Adam was there, close and all but in his mind. Adam's power touched him and led him along the path until finally it was over.

When his mind finally realigned with his body everything was completely new and there were too many things trying to make him take notice of them. He whined at the overload and was shocked as he registered the canine sound.

[Sshh,] Adam's voice drifted into his thoughts, [I have you.]

Adam, he focused on Adam. His lover was still there, still close, still part of him. Now Adam's teeth were gripping the skin and fur at the back of his neck for purchase and there were powerful front legs gripping his rib cage, but they were still joined. He could not even imagine how that was

possible, but clearly it was and his thoughts fired with lust and need as well as everything else. When Adam moved to dismount it was definitely not what he wanted. He growled his displeasure even before the thought had resolved in his head.

[Not yet,] Adam told him, tone tightly controlled, [you are not ready, later.]

[Now!]

He was almost surprised when he managed to reply; his thoughts weren't exactly coherent. Adam laughing at him was not exactly the response he wanted or expected, but there was no other way to describe the huffing noise Adam made.

[Later,] Adam said firmly and then nipped him before jumping off the bed.

The way Adam just stood there and looked at him was all challenge and Kris wasn't having that. Completely forgetting what he had been focussing on, he stood up and jumped straight at Adam, only to find that Adam wasn't there anymore.

[You can do better than that, Pup.]

Kris skidded to a halt on the stone floor and immediately changed direction to charge after Adam. Unfortunately Adam was a lot better at this wolf thing than he was and a hell of a lot faster. Kris forgot about everything else as they chased around the room and soon he was revelling in the game rather than in needing to catch Adam. He felt wild and free and happy.

As they moved and dodged and wrestled, Kris felt instincts firing he did not fully understand. He let himself explore them and revel in them and at the back of his mind he knew there was purpose to the game. The animal in him was free and he was learning it.

He didn't stop moving until Adam finally seemed to have had enough and pinned him down and began to groom him.

[You have a thing for washing me,] he grouched, but not exactly seriously, because Adam's complete attention was nothing to grouch about.

[I have a thing about doing many things to you,] Adam replied and continued to lick his fur.

[Do I get to do things back?]

After the chase his mind was much clearer, but his instincts and urges seemed to be much closer to the surface in his wolf form. He felt as if he could do anything just because he wanted to.

[Maybe, when I'm done.]

Kris found out what it was like to laugh as a wolf. He was happy, relaxed and free; he was not about to complain.

[When do we get back to the sex?]

Adam lifted his head and wiggled his eyebrows; Kris had never realised a wolf could do that.

[When I say so.]

Surrender was the only option, Kris was sure. Against the force that was Adam there was no other way.

~*~

They had eventually gotten to the sex in both wolf and human form and Kris woke up the next morning buzzing with magic and the afterglow. He was on top of the world and he even managed to smile all the way through the final fitting for his wedding outfit. Adam was dragged off to discuss the new defences about half way through, but Kris didn't even mind that too much. Once his fitting was over he was going to join the meeting and he feared his mother's wrath more than his father's, so he knew where he had to be.

It was as he was walking back across the courtyard that he heard a commotion at the main gate. His senses had been growing sharper ever since he had accepted the Mistress' power and since embracing the wolf it was like a whole new world. What he heard was a woman in distress. Looking over, he came to a complete stop as images flashed through his mind.

A mother crying and screaming for her child as they were dragged apart filled his thoughts and all he could do was stare at the same face aged by the years in between. At the gate was a couple and the woman was

holding one of the flyers the queen had sent out to announce the royal wedding. It had a likeness of him and Adam on it and the woman was pointing to the picture of Adam. The guard was ignoring her pleas and standing his ground and Kris kicked his brain back into gear. There was no hesitation in his actions as he jogged towards the gate.

"Stand down, Soldier," he said, causing the poor man to whirl around and stand to attention.

"These gentlefolk are asking after the mage, Your Majesty," the guard said quickly and bowed.

"Thank you," he replied with a nod, "you can leave this to me."

The guard appeared a little torn; no one was used to him being anything but a deacon who mostly needed protecting, but when he gave the man a stare the guard finally backed off. That left Kris with two people he recognised, but had never met. He wasn't sure what to say.

"Your Majesty," Adam's father, because there was no doubt in Kris' mind who they were, said, "my name is Eber and this is my wife..."

"Leila," Kris finished for him.

Adam's mother's eyes opened with shock and hope.

"It is?" she asked holding out the flyer.

Kris nodded. Then he suddenly found himself with an arm full of sobbing woman and he didn't know what to do. Adam's mother had a grip like a blacksmith and Kris thought his ribs might break, but he shook his head at the guard when it looked as if the man might come back to intervene.

"I'm sorry," Eber said, coming forward to try and pry his wife off.

"Don't worry," Kris said, awkwardly wrapping an arm around the distressed woman, "I understand. I know what happened. Adam never knew how to find you again."

"We were forced from our home when Adam was taken," Eber said, gently but firmly repossessing his wife, "we settled in the low country with our other son."

"When we saw the flyer posted in the village square," Leila said, her voice stronger than before, "we had to come."

**"Of course." Kris indicated the way to the main doors with his arm.
"Please, follow me."**

His mind was racing. Adam had been taken from his family when only a child and Kris knew his husband to be had come to believe they were dead. That they weren't, that they were right there was amazing.

"Please wait here," he said after leading them into the corridor outside the war room, "I won't be a moment."

He entered the room quietly, fully aware that there was a deep discussion going on between all the strategists from his own home and the Ridian lands. With the knowledge of the new enemy from across the sea came plans for fortifying the ports and sending delegations to the other kingdoms along the coast. It was a huge job to prepare and it was going to take a lot of planning.

When Adam looked up at him he beckoned and Adam gave him a nod, but also a small gesture that meant 'in a moment'. He could barely hold himself still as Adam pointed something out to the other people around the table before quietly excusing himself.

"You should come and look," Adam said, taking his hand and smiling, "your brother has some very interesting ideas."

"Later," Kris said, trying to hide his nervousness, "but before that I need you to come outside with me."

Adam frowned, obviously picking up his disquiet.

"Kris, what is it?"

"Outside," he insisted, "please, it's important."

Adam frowned at him, but went when Kris urged his lover through the door. As they stepped into the corridor outside Kris slipped his hand into Adam's and nodded his head towards where he had left Leila and Eber. Of course Adam followed his gaze and Kris knew the moment Adam recognised who was standing there. Something that Kris always admired about Adam was the way his lover moved with such languid, easy grace,

but the moment Adam laid eyes on Leila and Eber all such ease vanished.

Adam's whole body went rigid as if he'd just seen something dangerous.

Leila looked as if she was about to burst into tears and Eber was as still as Adam. When Adam turned to look at Kris, his face was full of confusion and questions, as if he simply didn't believe what he was seeing. Kris just nodded, because it was the only answer Adam really needed.

The man was gone from Adam's eyes and the terrified child was there instead and Kris gently led his lover towards the waiting couple. It was Leila who broke the stalemate, she slipped from her husband's embrace and walked directly to Adam and opened her arms. Kris let go of his lover's hand as Adam kind of melted into the small woman's embrace. It was like Adam shrank and Leila just engulfed her son. Adam made an incoherent sound.

Kris shared a look with Eber and then the man moved to his wife and son as well. Kris stood back and just waited. In this it was not his place to intrude.

When Adam finally looked up his face was streaked with tears and he threw a grateful look at Kris as if Kris had just delivered him the moon.

"You grew so tall," Leila said, looking up at her son and holding his face in her hands. "I'm so proud of what you have become."

"I went back," Adam said in little more than a whisper, "when I was old enough I went back, but you weren't there."

"We had to run," Leila told him, "but we never stopped looking."

It was all the explanation Adam seemed to need and he pulled both his parents into his arms again.

Kris wasn't prone to tears, but he felt his eyes prickling at what he was witnessing. There had been a hole in Adam's life, even with the place Adam had found and the person Adam had grown into, Adam's early trauma had left a wound and Kris could sense it closing even as he was watching. He couldn't think of a better way to complete the preparations for the wedding.

~*~

Kris' mother adopted Adam's parents the moment she met them. It didn't matter in the slightest that Leila and Eber were commoners from one of the outlying villages, Kim and Leila just seemed to bond. Kris tried not to be too nervous about that, even when the queen began talking about making Leila one of her ladies in waiting and started making noises to her husband about how it was really time there were some men with common sense on the King's advisory council. When his mother had an idea in her head, Kris knew not to argue and spent his time being happy that Adam was happy and not thinking about how the queen was organising things again.

When it finally came to the big day, about the only thing Kris remembered of the ceremony was how absolutely stunning Adam looked. His mother and Adam had outdone themselves, literally. Adam's suit was made of gold inlaid silk and black leather, which Kris was pretty sure shouldn't have worked, but, on Adam, so did. It contrasted with Kris' clothes, which were all cream and gold and he was pretty sure they made a very eye catching pair. He did have enough brain power to hope the court artists managed to capture their likenesses well.

As for everything else, Kris wasn't sure if he managed to say his vows in the right order, all he knew was that he took one look at Adam, the wolf under his skin sat up and started chanting 'mine'. In the temple he could feel the familiar presence of the Mistress and he knew she was there watching from among her people, but he only had eyes for Adam. The kiss at the end, he did remember that and he remembered the shower of gold sparkles that fell out of nowhere over them when they did it. The glitter fell like snow, settling on all and then vanishing as the crowd forgot propriety and roared their support at their Goddess' blessing.

The kiss was amazing and short circuited what was left of Kris' brain. He could not have sworn how he and Adam made it from the temple to the banqueting hall after that. It was surreal, honestly surreal and Kris felt as if he kept stepping in and out of his body. The only thing that kept him grounded was Adam. Strong, beautiful, wonderful Adam, who seemed to realise he was about to float off and anchored him with constant touches.

After the wedding there was the feast, then his father made a speech and then there were tributes. Everyone who was anyone seemed to want to say congratulations in far more words than simply one and Kris was glad his mind was wandering. Towards, what he hoped was the end of the long stream and in the middle of one really boring tribute he considered

climbing into Adam's lap and putting a stop to the monotony in a very direct manner.

"Behave," Adam whispered quietly, slipping a hand onto his thigh under the table.

"I can't," he said, and he really didn't know how much longer he could sit still.

Ever since the full moon he had been a little bit more excitable than usual. Adam had told him it was the wildness coming out. He hadn't had the practice Adam had had and he was having trouble focussing. What he really wanted to do was throw Adam down on the nearest flat surface, rip Adam's clothes open and ride his husband until they both couldn't take it anymore. The fact that even thinking the word 'husband' had little shots of excitement going off in his chest didn't help.

"Focus on the food," was Adam's only advice.

Food and sex, that was what Adam told him animals usually worried about, but Kris just couldn't work himself up to be interested in the first right then. He'd already eaten more than he had wanted to.

"That won't work anymore."

He didn't like being out of control, but he couldn't help it. The fact people were watching them had helped for a while, but even that was losing its potency as a deterrent.

The doors at the end of the hall banging open and a scantily clad woman striding down the hall had never been better timed. Kris wasn't overly interested in the female of the species, but it was the perfect interruption. It had just about enough shock value to make him pay attention.

"Wolf Princes," the dark skinned woman hailed as she came to a halt in the middle of the room, "I bring a tribute from the Daughters of the Goddess. We wish you joy in your union and pledge our support against the enemy that comes."

There was silence around the hall. The Daughters of the Goddess were a secretive sect from the kingdom of Halir to the west. They were as magical as the Wolf Mages and as fierce in reputation, but they did not usually interest themselves in affairs outside their own order. Kris stood up

slowly, Adam rising by his side. It was what could be termed a delicate political situation and it had landed right in his lap. For the first time that day his thoughts had a little clarity.

"Welcome, Sister," he said, saying whatever words popped into his head, "we thank you for your tribute. May I ask your name?"

The woman appeared surprised by his direct approach.

"I am Lil," she said, looking him directly in the eye, "my Sister Megan is without, waiting with our horses."

That did beg the question as to how both women had made it past all the guards, but Kris decided not to worry about that too much.

"Then please," Kris said, giving her a small bow, "return to our Sister, allow the stable hands to take care of your mounts and return to refresh yourselves at our table."

He could see the servants moving to create places even as he spoke and for the first time Lil appeared to relax a little.

"Thank you, Your Majesty," Lil said and bowed to him in return.

It said a great deal about the respect the Daughters held in local legend that the silence remained until Lil had turned and walked all the way back to the door. Only as she stepped outside did the talking start and it was like a wall of noise. When he looked over to his father, Kris saw the king looking quite proud and he thought maybe he had handled it okay. Adam gave his hand a squeeze and they slowly sat down again.

Only once in recorded history had the Daughter of the Goddess and the Wolf Mages ever worked in tandem and that had been at the dawn of their part of the world's civilisation. Kris remembered the stories told by the bards. He had seen the official archives as well, since it was part of the church's job to maintain them, but it was the stories that had made the most impact.

In a way it frightened him that two such powerful forces were coming together, because it underlined how great a threat this new enemy was. Yet it also gave him a greater hope that they would triumph. There was nothing in the world that could stand against the peoples of the Goddess united. Nothing at all.

As it turned out, Megan was a smaller fair skinned woman, but just as beautiful and dangerous looking as Lil. Kris almost laughed when he saw his brother's star struck expression as Daniel first laid eyes on her. Gentle women tended to wear a lot more clothes than either of the Daughters of the Goddess and Daniel appeared smitten. Kris even managed to keep his mind off of leaping on Adam while watching the interplay.

That didn't mean that Kris wasn't incredibly glad when they finally had the chance to escape. He dragged Adam all the way from the banqueting hall to their room, pushed his new husband through the door, wished really, really hard that they were both naked and threw magic at the problem. So far Adam had shown him how to do simple little things with his new power, but one thing he had figured out pretty quickly was that it was mostly about will.

Given that he wanted nothing more than to get at his husband right then and his magic seemed to be in agreement, both their clothes vanished. Kris wasn't sure where they ended up, but he really didn't care, because he pushed Adam against the wall, jumped, wrapped his legs around his husband and basically said 'take me now' with every fibre of his being.

"Heavens, I love you," Adam said, wrapping long fingers into Kris' hair and dragging him in for a kiss.

That just made it all the better. Kris' heart all but exploded with joy and he set about showing Adam just how much the sentiment was returned.

The End