



Just the Way You Are

A free holiday read
by

Dana Marie Bell
(Logan and Kir of Very Much Alive)

Just the Way You Are

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Dana Marie Bell

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Just the Way You Are
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First electronic publication: December 2011

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Dedication

To Dusty, who loves me just the way I am.

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Prologue

“Why is there a symbol of a non-Aesir god stinking up my living room?”

Kir stifled a laugh at the disgruntled tone of his lover. He placed another ball on the tree and decided to let Jordan handle this one. He’d already heard the explanation once and wasn’t certain he could explain it nearly as well as she could.

“It’s a Chrishanukyule tree.” Jordan hummed a happy holiday tune and threw tinsel at her brother, Jeff, whose fingers were in the cookie jar, literally. “Stop that! Those are for later.”

Jeff grumbled but put the lid back on the jar. “You are no fun anymore.”

“Do I have to call mom?”

Jeff shuddered and put his hands up in the air. “Uncle!”

“I thought so.” With a satisfied nod Jordan turned back to the tree.

Fenris was watching everything with a bemused smile. He’d heard the explanation, too, and from the look on his face it made no more sense to him now than it had then.

“What did you call the tree?”

Kir began to laugh. Only Jordan could get that degree of confusion from Logan, and that was saying something. As the Norse god of trickery, it was hard to muddle him.

“Knock it off, Blondie.” Logan’s arms wrapped around him, a loving embrace he never tired of even after all these centuries. “It’s not *that* funny.”

“Wait for it.” He pressed a kiss against Logan’s cheek, the stubble there such a contrast from Jordan’s smooth, soft skin.

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Jordan smiled softly. "It's a Chrishanukyule tree."

One of Logan's dark brows rose. "Which is, exactly?"

"A Christmas-Chanukah-Yule tree. See?" She pointed to tiny menorahs turned into decorations, along with traditional Christmas balls and pineapples.

"Pineapples?" Logan flicked a finger at one of the golden ornaments, Kir still cradled in his arms.

"Don't ask." Kir started laughing again. "*Please* don't ask."

"Yeah, she might be forced to tell you." Jeff picked up a handful of popcorn and began munching happily.

The front door slammed open. "Do not tell me you started decorating the tree without me."

Kir watched as his sister-in-law, Jamie, stomped into the room, her bright red curls bouncing around her pixie face. The scowl on her face would send a major-general running. Behind her came Travis, her fiancé, who watched her like a hawk. Jamie had fully recovered from her ordeal with Grimm, but that didn't stop the god of justice from keeping a very close eye on her.

Jeff hid behind Fenris, making the werewolf laugh out loud, a rich sound that had Logan tightening his hold on Kir from sheer happiness. Logan was still getting over having his son out of the horrible prison Grimm had thrown him in, but both Logan and Fenris were adjusting nicely.

"You are so brave, *elskede*." Fen tugged on one of Jeff's curls, wrapping the bouncy strand around his finger with a satisfied expression.

"Ugh. That's it. I'm cutting it off again." After being claimed by his werewolf lover, Jeff's curls had grown at an alarming rate. It was now much longer than his sister's, reaching the top of his ass. Every time he tried to cut it short it grew back overnight, much to Jeff's disgust and Fenris's delight.

Jamie tilted her head and studied Jordan's Chrishanukyule tree. "Why the hell are there pineapples on the tree?"

Kir was laughing so hard he couldn't hear Jordan's quick explanation.

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“You are *so* weird.” Jamie filched a cookie and ran behind Travis before Jordan could get to her. Of course, as pregnant as Jordan was, she wasn’t moving very fast these days.

“Having fun?” Logan’s breath tickled his ear as his lover rocked him in his arms.

“More than I thought I would.” He grinned up at Logan. As much as he loved Logan, he adored having their crazy family around him.

“More than our first Christmas?”

Kir snuggled close, Logan’s warmth enveloping him. “Not even close.”

“What are you two whispering about over here?” Jordan joined them, touching Kir’s cheek, pressing her hand to Logan’s arm.

Kir pulled her into his arms, not surprised when she didn’t remove her hand from Logan. The three loved to snuggle together, tangled in a pile, touching each other always. “Logan’s second best present to me.”

“Oh?” She leaned back to shoot Logan a look. “Do tell.”

Logan was shaking his head. “I’d say it was Kir’s second best present to me.”

Kir rolled his eyes. Logan always said that, and Kir always disagreed.

“Now I’m intrigued.”

Kir stared at the tree, fascinated by the bright lights. He loved this time of year, even if his powers were at their weakest. It always reminded him of their stay in the City of Lights, and the day he’d convinced Logan how much he really loved him. “Once upon a time, there was a beautiful dark-haired woman...”

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Chapter 1

Lorelei winced as the door to the tavern slammed open. The blond man who entered was in a foul mood, a mood Lori was becoming more and more acquainted with the longer they stayed in France. It was time to move on, but she'd been putting it off. She'd grown ridiculously fond of the little home they shared, the knick-knacks they'd bought together, the lace doilies she'd learned to make. She couldn't blame Lucien one little bit for his growing aggravation.

Her lover was growing impatient with her desire to hold onto a past that put them both in danger.

"Ho, Lorelei! A mug, if you please." Lucien took a seat at the table and winked at her. "How's my girl?"

"Better than you, you grumpy old sod." Lorelei carried Lucien his pint. She damn near winced at the tired expression on her lover's face. "You've been working too hard, *mon ange*."

Lucien grinned up at her, but it was a shadow of his former glory. "The tiles won't set themselves, *mon amour*."

Lorelei winced. Lucien's hands were dark with ink, his complexion pale. His glorious blond hair was tied back with a simple ribbon. There was a splotch of ink on his forehead she knew it would take days to get rid of.

He was so beautiful her heart hurt.

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He picked up her hand and kissed the back of it. Lorelei suppressed a shiver. It never failed to amaze her that someone as special as Lucien had chosen her to spend his life with.

“When are you coming home, *mon amour*?”

“Soon, *mon cher*.” Lorelei allowed herself one simple touch to his cheek before racing off to deal with another customer. She’d been warned about showing favoritism, even to her lover. She couldn’t afford to lose this job, not yet. They’d need the funds if they were to leave. Running with money was much better than running without. And if Lucien was getting anxious to move on, then it was more than time to do so.

Damn it. She should have listened to her instincts and run a year ago, but the allure of Paris hadn’t worn off, not by a long shot. Lorelei loved living in the City of Lights, and her lover did, too. That should never have stopped her from her primary goal. Lucien’s life was worth more than all the sparkling lights and tinkling laughter of the Parisians.

Lucien lifted his tankard. “Another, *s’il vous plaît*.”

His wan smile sent Lorelei’s heart to her feet. Something had been bothering Lucien for some time, something he refused to share with her. Every now and then she saw him watching her with such sorrow she feared for his sanity. Was the loss of his family weighing heavily on his heart? He’d given up so much to be with her. Despite his protests, there were nights when he’d sit and stare at the fire, refusing to speak to her for hours on end.

Perhaps he would be better off without her, but she was selfish. She was long past the point where she could exist without him.

She grimaced as yet another fat man patted her bottom, hoping her lover ignored the greasy fish merchant. If Lucien lost it—

Thunder rattled the tavern’s shutters, startling the patrons. Lorelei flashed a glare toward her lover, only to find Lucien’s head bowed over his tankard.

Merde.

“Oy, Lorelei! Your shift’s over, girl. Better head home before that storm breaks.”

“*Merci, Maurice.*” Lorelei sauntered over to Lucien, her hips swaying enticingly, still putting on a show for the patrons. She made sure that her smile was just for Lucien, hoping to soothe his possessive streak.

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It didn't work. Lightning flashed outside the windows. If Lucien didn't calm down soon things would be bad.

"I'm ready, *mon cœur*."

His golden head nodded once, but he didn't look up at her. He stood and held out his hand. "Let's leave."

She had the feeling he wasn't just talking about the tavern.

Lucien took a deep breath and tried to calm the raging storm inside him. Someone had touched what was his, and it drove him insane. *No one* should touch Lorelei. She had suffered more than anyone should ever have to, and if it meant Lucien's life he'd see to it she never hurt again.

Sometimes he couldn't miss the sadness in her gaze, the longing for something she was denying herself. Lorelei never complained, never wavered from her belief that what she was doing was right, but still. If only he could find a way to ease her pain, to show her what she truly mean to him.

"'Tis chilly tonight, *mon amour*."

Lucien nodded. "It is, indeed."

Lorelei took a deep breath. "We need to run, don't we?"

"*Oui*." He'd sensed a powerful presence in the city recently. Their time in Paris had run out. Perhaps he'd persuade his lover to visit somewhere warm, like Mexico or the Bahamas. He'd always been partial to water, but Lorelei would object to being on an island. She would swear, and rightly so, that she couldn't adequately protect him surrounded by water on all sides. With her unique handicap she wouldn't be able to get them off the island if something were to happen.

A shape shifter who couldn't fly. Who would have guessed at such a thing?

Lorelei yanked on his hand so fiercely he almost lost his balance. "Mistletoe."

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Ah. No need for an explanation, then. Lorelei scowled fiercely at the small branch with its white berries, safely tucked away behind the store's thick glass window. Lucien couldn't find it in himself to hate the small plant. It wasn't its fault his father was insane.

"We're here, *mon ange*."

Lucien pulled the key from his pocket and opened the door. "You go in. I need to run a quick errand."

"But—"

Lucien placed his hand on Lorelei's lips. While his work was tiring, hers was back-breaking. "Bathe. Rest. I'll be quick, I swear."

"Take me with you." The fear on her face was almost more than he could bear.

"I'll be safe, I swear it." There hadn't been an attempt on his life since Cairo ten... no, fifteen years ago. It should be safe enough.

"If they've found us, you'll need me."

"Shh. Trust me, *s'il vous plaît*."

She took his hand and kissed the palm. "No one else, *mon ange*."

"*Je t'aime*." More than ever, Lorelei was his love.

She kissed him, warming him from the inside out. His passionate, fiery lover. She'd never understand how much he truly needed her. "*Je t'aime, mon ange*." She grinned at him, that devil's smile that had won his heart. "Don't be long. It's our last night in the city of lovers, *non?*" She turned from him in a grand swirl of skirts, only to trip at the last second. She caught herself on the hall table, ignoring his hearty laughter. "*Jupes stupide!*" She glared at him over her shoulder, fire dancing in her amber eyes. She straightened her skirts with an impatient huff. "Go, already."

He left, still chuckling. She'd been cursing her skirts since the ninth century. He doubted she'd stop any time soon. She hated the bloody things.

He stilled. Could that be the problem, the source of her never-ending sorrow? Lucien walked slowly toward his destination, his mind whirling.

Yes, it would make sense. To deny such an important part of her for his sake, he could see how it would cause her pain. She'd chosen to present herself as female for centuries now. As Baldur could not change form, they had decided it was safer to travel as man and wife. No one

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questioned a married couple. He'd easily agreed to Loki's ruse, choosing to hide in plain sight. It was rare that he got to see his lover in his true form. If caught, Loki would transform as soon as he saw Baldur, becoming the female he'd chosen to present himself as. He'd been Chiaki, outcast wife of a *gaijin*; Lotte, Rolf's buxom, blonde German *haus frau*; Aideen, his fiery Irish lass; and most recently Jyotika, Sir Conrad's doe-eyed, dark-haired Indian mistress. There had been many more over the years, but there was no form Loki wore that Baldur did not want with a ferocity that scared him.

When was the last time he'd seen his lover's sculpted chest, his thick manhood? They'd made love so many times over the centuries, hard flesh to soft, it was sometimes difficult to remember Loki was, in fact, male.

Come to think of it, they'd never made love when Loki was male.

Merde. Fils de pute.

No wonder his lover was upset. He was denying himself, and in doing so depriving them both of the joy of Baldur making love to Loki. He'd adored Chiaki, Lotte, Aideen and Jyotika, but didn't Loki know that the one Baldur loved was himself, no matter what form he wore?

If not, the fault lay with him. Baldur would have to see to it that Loki understood how much Baldur wanted him.

Him, just the way he was.

Lorelei heated the water, eager to wash off the greasy feel of the tavern. Sometimes she wished they'd chosen to live as rich merchants or minor lords, but if they lived those lives all of the time it would make finding them that much easier. None of the Old Man's lackeys would think to look for the heir to his throne living like a common laborer.

Washing away the feel of unwanted touches was worth keeping Baldur out of Odin's clutches. *Anything* was worth it.

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Well. Almost anything. One of Sir Conrad's cronies had once attempted to force himself on Jyotika, a thing that she would not allow. The "friend" had disappeared for weeks, only to have his body wash ashore sometime later, bloated and half eaten by fish. It was a fitting end to a disgusting little man, but the ensuing scandal ended their time in India.

Once the water was heated, Lorelei disrobed, setting aside her skirts. If she knew Lucien, her lover was even now purchasing travelling clothes. She wondered where they'd wind up this time. America? Egypt? Russia?

If it was up to Loki they'd head for America. The fledgling country had grown and was ripe with opportunities and places to hide. If Odin looked for them there he'd be in for a rude awakening.

Does mistletoe even grow in the New World? She shook the thought off. Now wasn't the time to dwell on her lover, alone in a city rife with the stuff. If she did, she would be out the door and chasing him down.

Lorelei glanced around, making sure all of the windows were covered. Their home was small, barely two rooms. She couldn't afford to be seen in her transformed state. She made it a point to become male at least once a week. They'd agreed long ago that a pregnancy while on the run was not an option, so transforming took care of any possibilities.

Lorelei hated it. She wanted children, yearned for what she'd lost so long ago. Even the quick visits to her children, stuck in their prisons, didn't satisfy her. She wanted them *free*.

She wanted her family.

Taking a deep breath, Lorelei shimmered. Black locks shortened and took on a dark red hue. Blue eyes turned a foxy brown. His breasts sank into his chest, while his cock grew. He shot up a foot from Lorelei's petite frame to his larger, warrior's build. Loki shook his dark red hair out of his eyes and sighed. "Better hurry." He damn near jumped at the sound of his voice. He'd gotten used to Lorelei's sweet soprano, not Loki's deep rumble.

He stepped into the tub, determined to wash quickly. Lucien wouldn't take long at his task. Loki needed to be done before his lover returned.

His lover. Gods above, how had that happened?

Not that he was complaining. Baldur had slipped into his life, his bed and his heart, and Loki would never let him go. If that meant existing as a woman, being pinched, poked, and

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prodded, running from insane witch hunters, would-be rapists and whoremongers, so be it. Perhaps, someday, he'd forget altogether that he'd ever been a man. Each day he could feel that part of him slipping further and further away. Soon, there would be nothing but the woman left.

Loki thought of his lover, his best friend. Baldur had never been with a man, this he knew without a shadow of a doubt. To keep his love, he'd be a female for the rest of eternity and beyond.

He stared down at his cock and smiled wryly. *It's worth it.*

He washed his hair, so much easier to dry in this form. He'd use his flame and be dry and naked, waiting for his lover to return. They'd make love as Lucien and Lorelei one last time, christening this Christmas Eve with their own loving rite before running once more on the morrow.

Just as he rinsed the last of the soap from his hair, the door slammed open. Freezing cold blew into the room. Loki froze, in more ways than one.

"'Tis freezing out, *mon amor.*" The door slammed shut and Loki was Lorelei, dark hair dripping, water beaded on her breasts.

"Welcome home, *mon ange.*"

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Chapter 2

Lucien sighed wearily. Loki had transformed so quickly all he'd caught was a flash of red hair, a gleam of water on a firm, masculine ass. Now wide blue eyes gleamed at him with wicked intent, and it wasn't enough. It would never be enough, not until he had all of Loki. "Here." He tossed the package at his lover and removed his worn coat.

Lorelei's tinkling laughter washed over him. "Not even a *Joyeux Noël*?"

He glanced over as he hung his coat. "Open it before you ask me that."

Lorelei frowned. She put the package down and stepped out of the tub. "Should I be dressed for this, *mon ange*?"

Lucien shook his head. "Perhaps it would be best if you were not."

The mischievous twinkle was back in her eye. Lucien found himself wishing for Loki's warm, fiery brown rather than Lorelei's crystal blue. "I think I like it already."

Lucien smiled. He hoped so.

Lorelei dried herself off, paying particular attention to her breasts and the juncture of her thighs, tempting him with flashes of creamy flesh.

At any other time Lucien would have taken her up on her offer, but not tonight. He didn't want soft breasts and arms. For the first time he admitted to himself he wanted a hard chest and strong arms. He didn't want a woman's wet quim. He wanted that firm ass he'd barely caught a glimpse of, a taste of the hard cock he could barely remember.

Tonight, he wanted the truth. They could play with the fantasy another night.

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Lorelei was frowning by the time she finished drying off. “Is everything all right?”

“More than.” He gestured towards the brown wrapped package. “Open it.”

Lorelei dropped the towel, comfortable with her nudity. “Now you’re making me nervous.”

Lucien winced. That hadn’t been his intention. “*Jeg elsker deg, Loki.*”

Lorelei froze. They’d said it only in French since arriving in Paris five years ago. No matter where they lived or what language they spoke, it was an unspoken rule that they only said it in the tongue of the country they were in. They had never broken that rule.

Until now.

Lorelei’s eyes were wet and wild. Her hands clutched the brown package, little flames flickering along her skin. His warrior was ready to do battle. “They’ve found us, haven’t they?”

“No.” Lucien crossed to her and took her into his arms. “No, *bébé*. We’re still safe.”

“Then what—”

“Open the package.”

“Lucien?”

He stepped back, releasing her. “Open it.” Still she hesitated. “For me.”

Lorelei tore into the package, terrified out of her wits. Lucien was acting far too strangely. Had Odin gotten to him? Had he eaten or drunk anything with apple in it in recent memory? Gods, could Odin have somehow slipped something into the tavern’s ale without Lorelei’s knowledge?

She was so nervous the cloth dropped out of the package. She bent down and picked up... “What is this?”

“A gift. Wear them for me.”

Her brows rose. “*Mon ange*, women don’t wear trousers.”

“No. They don’t.”

Lorelei frowned. What was going on? “I don’t understand.”

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Lucien took the trousers from her grasp and placed them gently on the table. “I want to see my lover.”

“I’m right here.” She spread her arms, her breasts moving, swaying heavily. She wasn’t as busty as Lotte had been, but she was close. Lucien loved her breasts no matter what size they were.

“No. I want *Loki*.”

She started. “I am Loki.”

Lucien smiled, that sweet, tender expression that meant so much to her that she’d sink the sun into the sea if it meant she’d get to see it every day. “No, *bébé*. I don’t want the illusion tonight. I want the truth. I want Loki.”

But that meant... they wouldn’t... “No.”

His brows rose, that glorious smile dimming. “No?”

She shook her head, too terrified to speak. She was not giving up his touch. It was her only anchor to the world. Without it, she had nothing.

He cupped her cheek, rough skin to smooth. “Please. Trust me, *petite amie*. Do this for me.”

She closed her eyes. How could she refuse? She trusted him and no one else. For him, if this was his wish, she would do it.

She allowed the transformation to take her, flowing into her true form. When Loki opened his eyes he found himself for the first time in centuries he looked down at his lover.

“Happy?”

Lucien grinned. “*Oui*.”

Loki choked as Lucien took his lips in a kiss so hot it nearly burned a man who’d been born of fire.

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Why hadn't they done this before? Kissing Loki when he was a man was nothing like kissing any of his female forms. It didn't take long for Loki to take control of the kiss. It became demanding, fiery. A hard cock rubbed against Lucien's stomach, proving that he truly had his love in his arms. Loki's tongue thrust into Lucien's mouth as if he owned him.

Which he did.

Lucien put his arms around Loki's neck, throwing himself into the kiss with abandon. When Loki cupped the back of his head, holding him in place, Lucien allowed it. If his lover needed to be a little rough to prove to himself that Lucien really wanted him this way, then Lucien would simply enjoy the ride. Loki would never intentionally hurt him.

"You truly want this, *mon ange*?"

He shivered. Being called angel in Loki's deep, husky voice was very different from Lorelei's lighter tone. The devil himself wanted him to be his angel. He grabbed hold of Loki's cock and began stroking it, loving the way Loki moaned and thrust into his grip. "What do you think?"

Loki's eyes opened, the flames in them nearly taking over. He'd roused Loki's passion, and it was up to him to quench it.

Loki started to get to his knees, but Lucien—no, Baldur, if only for tonight—stopped him. "Let me."

Loki looked startled for just a moment, then intrigued. He'd always enjoyed it when Baldur licked his quim, riding Baldur's tongue and moaning fit to shake the stars from the heavens. Baldur was looking forward to seeing how he reacted to having his cock sucked.

Baldur dropped to his knees, eager for his first taste of the real Loki. He licked the head, catching the salty-sweet drops on his tongue.

"Oh, fuck. You're really going to do this, aren't you, *mon ange*?"

Baldur looked up at him through his lashes. "*Jeg elsker deg.*"

Loki brushed his hair away from his face. "I love you too. So much."

Baldur smiled and took Loki's cock in his mouth, sliding it down as far as he could take it.

Loki shivered. "*Merde.* Do that again."

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He tried to remember what it was like to look down and see Loki, his soft lips wrapped around him. He wanted to see those foxy-brown eyes staring up at him through a fall of red hair. He wanted to know male lips were surrounding his cock. He still loved Loki's more feminine forms, but damn if he didn't want to know what it was like to fuck and be fucked by the man he loved.

He slid his mouth up and down Loki's cock, over and over again, keeping his teeth to himself as best he could. When they accidentally brushed against the head of Loki's cock his lover burned, little flickers of flame dancing across his skin. "Like that, *mon amour*. More. Give me more."

Loki began thrusting into his mouth, and expression of wonder and lust unlike anything Baldur had seen since the first time they made love. He wanted Loki to know he accepted him no matter what form he wore. No matter what face his lover showed him, Loki was his. He took his lover down his throat until he choked.

"Not so far, *bébé*. Don't hurt yourself."

That was his lover, always protecting him, even from himself. Baldur made sure to suck extra hard as Loki's cock popped out of his mouth. There was one sure way to make sure Loki understood exactly what he was trying to convey. "I want you to fuck me."

Loki's eyes crossed, and Baldur laughed.

"Are you serious?"

Baldur stood and began stripping off his clothes. "We need oil, *non*? For when you slide that hard cock inside me?"

Loki whimpered.

He kicked off his shoes and practically tore off his trousers and small clothes. "Think about it." He leaned forward, for once the one to drive his partner to madness. "Sliding inside me. Hammering into me." He nipped Loki's earlobe, pleased to see it was still a source of pleasure for his lover. "Taking me." He kissed the side of Loki's neck, rubbing his whiskers over the sensitive skin. "Owning me."

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Loki grabbed hold of Baldur's shoulders and pushed his lover onto the table. "You want to be owned, *mon ange*? You want me to take you, mark you, make you mine?"

Baldur nodded. "Please. Love me."

Loki closed his eyes. How could he not know? "I do. So much."

"Just the way you are." Loki opened his eyes to find Baldur's blue ones, white clouds dancing across their depths. "I don't want you to become female, or even a different male. I want *you*."

He understood. How could he not? Baldur had practically hit him over the head with it. "Get the oil."

He watched the best sight in the world, a fully aroused Baldur, grab the flask of oil. Baldur shook it gently, then poured some into his hand. "Come here."

Loki grabbed hold of Baldur's slick hand and brought it to his cock. "Rub me."

Baldur took him in a firm grip and rubbed the oil all over his cock. He didn't miss a single inch, even getting some of the oil in the curls at his balls. "Wet enough?"

Loki smirked, remembering what it was to want as a man. He grabbed hold of Baldur and yanked him close, stealing a kiss from those perfect lips. "*Bébé*. I'm going to make you feel so good."

Baldur licked his lips. "Do it."

He led Baldur to the bed and lay him down. "I want to see those eyes when you come." He rubbed some of the oil off his cock, rubbing the tip of a wet finger over Baldur's hole. "There's no turning back now."

Baldur looked up at him, wanton and serene at the same time. "Finally."

Loki snorted a laugh. There it was, that innocent, sweet expression that had him calling his love an angel. "Push out." He inserted a slick finger into Baldur's hole, watching for any sign of discomfort.

"Did you know, as the god of spring, I'm responsible for more than plants?"

Loki paused, his finger still inside his lover. "And?"

"I'm in charge of animals as well."

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Loki blinked, but decided to keep going. Sometimes Baldur went off on the strangest tangents, but in the end it made sense.

“Do you know what animals do in the spring?” Baldur spread his legs further, enticing him. “I do.”

Loki shook his head. Baldur could tempt a saint, but Loki wasn't giving in. “I'm not rushing this.”

“I want you inside me.”

“I'm not going any faster.” He'd sooner cut his own prick off than hurt Baldur.

“Fuck me, Loki.” The white clouds were turning dark. Outside, thunder rattled the shutters.

“I will, when you're ready.” He kissed the tip of Baldur's nose, chasing the storm clouds away. “I want you to feel this.” He stroked inside his lover until he found the walnut shaped piece of flesh that made Baldur gasp and thrust upwards. “You like that?”

“Again.”

The deep, resonant timber of Baldur's voice would have scared him if he hadn't known that Baldur loved him. “As you wish.” He rubbed that spot again, fucking Baldur's ass with his fingers until his lover was good and loose. “Are you ready?”

Baldur's eyes were almost pure white. “Do it.”

Loki added a little more oil to his cock.

Suddenly he found himself flat on his back, Baldur straddling his hips. “You're moving too slow.”

He laughed as Baldur took hold of his cock and sank down on him. *So much for being in charge.*

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Chapter 3

Gods above, it felt so good. He wish he'd tried this sooner. Baldur slid until his ass rested on Loki's thighs, the feel of his lover inside him nearly driving him wild.

"Bounce, love."

Baldur bounced.

"Higher."

He slid up until Loki nearly fell out of his body, and then went back down. He gasped as the head of Loki's cock brushed against that delicious spot inside him. "Oh. I like that."

Loki's dark chuckle was strained. "Now do that over and over again, as much as you like." Loki took hold of his hips, holding him steady. "Ride me."

Baldur rode him. He went slow, fast, high and low. He sat on Loki's thighs and swiveled his hips, barely letting go of that delicious cock. All the while Loki watched him, his gaze glued to Baldur's face, his hand lazily stroking Baldur's cock. "No pain?"

Baldur shook his head and licked his lips. The pleasure was building, sending tingles up and down his spine.

"Want to try something?"

Baldur nodded. He'd do anything so long as the pleasure didn't stop.

Loki gently pushed him away. "Hands and knees."

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Baldur got on his hands and knees, remembering how much Loki had loved it when they did it in this position. When Loki breached him, he understood why. The stretch of him, the sheer length of him, seemed greater in this position.

Loki draped himself across Baldur's back, his hands on the mattress next to Baldur's. "Hold on."

Baldur held on as Loki began to fuck him. The slap of flesh against flesh was loud, amplifying his pleasure. He'd always loved the sounds of sex, the groans, the creaks of the bed and the wet sounds of a cock moving in and out of a willing body. Loki's teeth nipped his shoulder and he gasped.

Loki began rolling his hips as he fucked him, making sure he brushed that spot in Baldur's ass over and over again. He was on the verge of coming, of spraying his seed all over the sheet. He wanted to do that, to have Loki pound the pleasure out of him. To give up control to his man.

Loki grabbed his hair, pulling his head back. He took Baldur's lips in a scorching kiss, his body still fucking into him with a ruthless determination. "Come, *bébé*. Give it to me."

Baldur could barely breathe. "So close."

"Now. Do it now. Show it to me." Loki tucked his face against the side of his neck, every thrust of his hips dragging his whiskers across Baldur's skin.

It was too much. Baldur choked out a scream as he sprayed the sheets below him, every muscle in his body clenching as the orgasm tore through him. Nothing, *nothing* had ever felt this good.

They were doing this again, and again, and again.

Logan groaned and stilled, heat pouring into Baldur's passage. He squeezed the muscles of his ass, wringing another moan from his lover. Loki gave a gasping laugh before collapsing across Baldur's back. "*Merde*."

Baldur laughed and fell straight onto the wet spot. "*Merde*."

Loki pulled at the trousers, feeling strangely exposed. "Are you sure about this?"

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Baldur grinned. He looked happier than Loki had seen him in years. “We need to pick new names.”

Loki rolled his eyes. His lover hadn’t even gotten out of bed yet. He lay there, all golden and tempting, while Loki quietly panicked. Would Baldur decide to never do this again? “Where are we going?”

“I was thinking somewhere warm.” Baldur stretched, and Loki damn near ripped the irritating trousers off and hopped back into bed with him. If this was the only chance he’d have to make love to Baldur as a man, perhaps he *should* crawl back into bed with him.

“Mexico?”

“The Bahamas?”

“No islands.” Loki scowled and put on his waistcoat. It was simple, a bottle green with no pattern, but the quality was much better than Lucien and Lorelei were used to. Merchants, then?

“We could go to London.”

He shot Baldur a look. His lover was finally sitting up, scratching at his flat stomach and yawning. “I thought you said warm.”

Baldur’s grin widened. “That I did, oh grumpy one.”

Loki rolled his eyes. How could anyone be grumpy in the face of such beauty? “We could go to America. Check out the territories, do some exploring.” He waited to see what his lover thought of that idea.

“It would be easy to get to Mexico from there if we so wished it.” Baldur nodded, the decision made.

Loki breathed a sigh of relief as his lover stood and finally started to dress. When he winced pulling on his smallclothes Loki rushed to his side. “Are you all right?”

Baldur straightened and gave him a sweet kiss, a forever kind of kiss. “Yes.” He glared up at Loki. “We *are* doing that again.”

“Yes, my love.” There would be no denying either of them. He fully intended to feel Baldur’s hardness in his own ass before they landed on the shores of the New World. He stole another kiss from Baldur’s pouty lips. “Mm. Names.” He sighed and put his head on Baldur’s shoulder.

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Baldur stroked his hair and Loki damn near purred. He could spend eternity just like this, cradled in his lover's arms. "Don't laugh, but I've always been partial to Kiran."

Loki grinned but didn't lift his head. "You loved our time in India."

"Mm-hmm. And I think it's time I gave up my old name permanently."

This time he did lift his head. "I don't understand." Who was he if not Baldur?

"Baldur died that day, Loki. Perhaps it's time I let him go."

"And become what? King of England?"

"Nothing so fancy. Besides, I'd look terrible in that crown."

Loki snorted a laugh. "I'm still not sure I understand."

Baldur wrapped his arms around Loki, holding him close. He laid his head on Loki's shoulder and gave a content sigh. "Baldur is dead. I no longer want the name the Old Man gave me."

"So you'll reinvent yourself with a new name." Loki understood all about that.

"And you." Even through his shirt he could feel the soft kiss Baldur placed on his chest. "You, more than anyone, deserve a new name."

Loki would always be his name, but he didn't tell Baldur that. It was the name his children knew him by, a name he had to own, bad memories and all. "Do you remember what Kiran means?"

Baldur nodded. "Ray of Light."

Loki approved. His lover had always been the sunshine to his darkness. "We'll need to name me." A name chosen by his lover. It sounded perfect.

"Logan."

He tilted his head. "Why Logan?"

Baldur shrugged. "I like the sound of it."

"Logan and Kiran." He let the names roll off his tongue.

"Kiran and Logan."

Loki approved, no matter how they said it. "Should we share a last name?"

"I wish we could, but we look nothing alike, and the priests would have a fit at the thought of two men together." Baldur placed a finger across his lips. "And before you say it, I think it's time you roamed the world in your own skin, *n'est-ce pas?*"

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“Then I like Saeter.” He didn’t know where the name came from, just that it felt right.

“Logan Saeter. Perfect.” Baldur gave him a long, slow kiss. “I’m going with something simpler.” Baldur closed his eyes, thinking. “Kiran Tate?”

“Mm. Kiran Tate and Logan Saeter.”

“Maybe someday it will be Tate-Saeter.”

Loki shivered. “Now *that* would be perfect.”

They snuck out of the house, Logan finally looking like the man Kiran had first fallen in love with. They blended in with the crowd, just two more men making their way to the docks through the holiday crowd. They purchased the tickets for New York on the next ship out, grateful that one was leaving that very night. Still, Kiran was nervous. They were cutting it close. Too close.

The powerful presence was drawing nearer; they’d almost left it too late.

He scanned the crowd, keeping one eye on his lover and the other on any possible threat. He knew Logan did the same, that Logan would place himself in front of him if it came down to it. Logan took no chances with his safety, and becoming male had only made those instincts sharper. He constantly put himself in front of Kiran, the holiday making him more and more nervous. “They didn’t coat the world in mistletoe, love.”

Logan growled, and Kiran laughed.

“It’s not funny.”

“Yes, it is.” Logan’s protective streak was sweet.

Logan scowled at him and pushed him against a building close to where their ship was docked. “Wait here. I’m going to see if they’ll let us board.”

Kiran rolled his eyes. “Sit, Kiran. Stay. Woof.”

“Pain in my ass.” Logan turned to go.

“Not yet, but I’m counting on it.”

The burning look Logan sent him should have set his clothes ablaze. Kiran leaned against the dirty bricks, grateful for the coat protecting his clothing. He might need to replace it when

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they arrived in— “Shit.” Kiran straightened up slowly. He’d recognize that face, those eyes, anywhere. “Heimdall.”

Heimdall’s silver eyes shone brilliantly even in the smoky evening air of the docks. It was too late; he’d been seen, and there was no way the Guardian could not recognize him.

He needed to get to Logan, and fast.

Heimdall smiled and nodded, tipping his hat to Kiran. He did the same to Logan, who was suddenly at his side.

“*Merde*. What does he want?”

Heimdall smirked as if he heard Logan. He looked toward the ship Kiran and Logan were supposed to take away from Paris, then turned his gaze back on them. “Merry Christmas, gentlemen.”

They watched in astonishment as Heimdall turned his back on them and walked away, disappearing into the crowd.

“We can board.” Logan grabbed his hand and dragged him to the ship.

“*Qu’est-ce?*” Heimdall was letting them get away?

“Don’t question, just go.”

He went, holding Logan’s hand tightly the entire way.

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Epilogue

Logan's face was beet red. Jordan's mouth was hanging open. Fenris was whimpering, and Travis was laughing. Jamie was biting her lip, trying not to join her fiancé.

"What is it with you?" Jeff threw his hands in the air. "No one wants to hear all about your sex life!"

"Oh my god." Jordan hid her face in her hands. "I swear, Kir."

"Especially not in graphic detail. I'm surprised you didn't break out the flow charts." Travis was gasping for breath. The god of justice broke down in a heap of undignified giggles.

"He could have done a PowerPoint presentation." Jamie shrugged as Travis collapsed, his head buried in her lap. "What?"

"TMI, dude. Just... TMI." Magnus, who'd shown up in the middle of the story with his twin brother Morgan, looked absolutely horrified. "No one wants to know about your shit up in his shit doing... shit."

"I know bro. It reminds me of the time when you caught them in the elevator, when Kir was fucking—" Morgan, Magnus's twin, went down under a hail of popcorn before he could finish that sentence.

"Don't remind me. My fragile psyche is still scarred." Val, who'd arrived shortly before the twins, rubbed his eyes. "There are just some things a man shouldn't see his niece doing, especially with his half-brother."

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Kir just smiled. That elevator ride was one of his favorite memories, and not just because of the sex. It was when he'd known for certain his family would be all right.

Logan shook his head and pulled Kir into his arms. "I love you, *mon ange*."

Kir shivered. It had been decades since Logan had called him his angel. "I love you too."

"Hey, Kir?" Jeff settled in the crook of Fenris's arm, grinning when the wolf buried his face in Jeff's curls. The poor thing was still whimpering, probably at the graphic description of his father having sex. "Just out of curiosity. If that was your second best gift to each other, what was the first?"

Jordan took hold of his and Logan's hands as they bent down and kissed her cheeks.

"Oh, man." Jeff grimaced and rolled his eyes. "They're gonna say love, it's gonna turn into a Hallmark moment with a sex highlight reel, and I'm gonna puke in the holiday M&M's."

This time it was Jeff went down under the hail of popcorn.

"I just have one question." Val pointed toward the tree. "Can someone please explain to me what the fuck is up with the pineapples?"

Kir laughed so hard that this time he really did start crying.

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About the Author

Dana Marie Bell wrote her first short story when she was thirteen years old. She attended the High School for Creative and Performing Arts for creative writing, where freedom of expression was the order of the day. When her parents moved out of the city and placed her in a Catholic high school for her senior year, she tried desperately to get away, but the nuns held fast, and she graduated with honors despite herself.

Dana has lived primarily in the Northeast (Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware, to be precise), with a brief stint on the U.S. Virgin Island of St. Croix. She lives with her soul mate and husband Dusty, their two maniacal children, an evil, ice-cream stealing cat and a bull terrier that thinks it's a Pekinese.

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