

BROTHER BELWITCHED

CHAPTER 30




AFTER DEVIN LEFT, THE SERVANTS CAME AND TOOK SERREN THROUGH HIS FEMININE MORNING RITUALS. HE IS BATHED, CORSETED, GOWNED. HIS FACE IS PAINTED, HIS HAIR DONE. IT TAKES FOREVER TO GET READY AS A WOMAN, AND SERREN RECOILS AT THE THOUGHT THAT DEVIN WANTS HIM TO PUT UP WITH THIS FOR THE REST OF HIS LIFE. RESENTMENT AND DENIAL TAKE HOLD!

I WAS
TIRED... NOT
THINKING
STRAIGHT... I DIDN'T
WANT IT. NO. NO.
OF COURSE
NOT.



DEVIN WAS
JUST SO
INSISTENT, PAWING
AT ME. HE KNEW I
DIDN'T WANT IT, BUT
HE WOULDN'T TAKE
NO FOR AN
ANSWER!





DEVIN WAS A
CAD TO TAKE
ADVANTAGE OF ME
LIKE THAT. HE IS SO
VULGAR. THE
WENSEAS ALWAYS
WERE THE LEAST
DIGNIFIED HOUSE.
LOOK AT THE WAY
THEIR WOMEN PAINT
THEIR FACES LIKE--
NO MATTER. HE IS
OUT!



IT WAS AWFUL HAVING A
MAN --- A MAN---

LADY NEMERIA
HAS ARRIVED.




YES. YES.

YES!



A MAN.



SERRENIA!
GOOD MORNING.
I TRUST YOU
SLEPT WELL.



SERRENIA?
SERRENINA?
HELLO? ARE
YOU IN A
TRANCE?


HIM
HOLDING ME,
LOOKING AT ME
LIKE I WAS *HIS*...
EVERYTHING ABOUT
BEING A WOMAN IS
EMBARRASSING,
ESPECIALLY THE WAY
MEN TREAT US. IT'S
SO... SO..





NINA!

OH! NOTHING. I WASN'T THINKING OF ANYTHING. I DIDN'T HEAR YOU COME IN. HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN STANDING THERE? I HAVE SOME THINGS FOR YOU TO DO. I WISH TO SEE ASRYN. IMMEDIATELY. SEND AN URGENT INVITATION. I BELIEVE HE IS MY BEST ALLY AGAINST PATTENIA. OH, YES, AND DEVIN IS TO BE BANNED FROM EVER SPEAKING TO ME AGAIN. LET'S GET THAT DONE RIGHT AWAY. OFF YOU GO.



ASRYN? YOU
MUST BE JOKING.
AND DEVIN?
BANNED? WHERE IS
THIS COMING
FROM?

IN MY
PRESENT
CONDITION, I
MUSTN'T BE SEEN
EVEN TALKING TO A
MAN WITH DEVIN'S
REPUTATION. HE'S
A CAD, AS YOU
WELL KNOW.




YOU'RE LYING.

WHY WOULD I LIE? NOW, ENOUGH CHIT CHAT. OFF YOU GO! SCURRY!

GODDESS.
SOMETHING
HAPPENED
BETWEEN YOU AND
DEVIN. WHAT WAS IT?
DID HE TRY AND
HAVE HIS WAY
WITH YOU?






WHAT? WHY
WOULD YOU
EVEN-- YOU
HAVE A DIRTY
MIND!

HA.
HA. NOTHING
HAPPENED. HA.
NOTHING.


HA.



OH, YOU
LITTLE FIBBER.
EVEN WHEN YOU
WERE A MAN I
COULD SEE RIGHT
THROUGH YOU, AND
NOW THAT WE'RE
BOTH GIRLS I READ
YOU AS EASILY AS
BELLININ
SCRIPT.

WHAT ARE
YOU-- AHHH! YOU
HAVE A MAIDEN'S
LONGING FOR DEVIN!
THE GLEAM IN YOUR
EYES BETRAYS ALL!
YOU'RE SCARED OF
YOUR OWN
FEELINGS!

ASRYN IS MY
OLDEST
FRIEND. I HAVE
KNOWN HIM SINCE
WE WERE LITTLE
BOYS. HE HAS
NEVER FAILED ME.
I TRUST HIM. NOW,
IF YOU ARE QUITE
FINISHED, I
WOULD LIKE
FOR YOU
TO--



FIRST, IF ASRYN IS SUCH A GOOD FRIEND, WHERE HAS HE BEEN THIS WHOLE TIME? SECOND, DON'T TRY AND CHANGE THE SUBJECT. WHAT'S GOING ON BETWEEN YOU AND DEVIN?

HA! I TOLD YOU. **NOTHING** HAPPENED. **NOTHING.** I'M SURE ASRYN HAS JUST BEEN-- BEEN-- WELL, IT DOESN'T MATTER. HE IS MY LOYAL FRIEND AND HE IS KNOWN TO BE ONE OF THE NICEST BOYS IN THE SHATTERED ISLES.



I KNOW
DEVIN TRIED
TO FORCE
HIMSELF ON
YOU! ADMIT
THE TRUTH!

FINE. I'LL
TELL YOU JUST
SO YOU LEAVE IT
BE. NO, HE DIDN'T
TRY AND FORCE
HIMSELF ON ME.
DEVIN KISSED ME. IT
WAS QUICK, SUDDEN. I
-UM-- I SLAPPED HIM
IN THE FACE. HE
APOLOGIZED AND
THAT WAS THE
END OF IT.



GOOD STORY,
MILADY. THERE'S
JUST ONE PROBLEM.
I CAN TELL YOU'RE
LYING!

AAAARRRGGGG!



NO MORE LIES,
PRINCESS. ON
OUR FRIENDSHIP,
TELL ME THE
TRUTH.

YOU WOULD
STAKE OUR
VERY
FRIENDSHIP ON
THIS MATTER?
VERY WELL. I
WILL TELL
YOU.



DEVIN
DIDN'T FORCE
HIMSELF ON
ME.


I LAY WITH
DEVIN.
WILLINGLY.

I COULD'VE
SWORN---



!

VERY WELL.
THAT'S DONE.
NOW, WRITE MY
LETTER. I MUST
SEE ASRYN.



HOLD ON--
YOU? AND
DEVIN? I MEAN--
YOU CAN'T JUST
DROP THAT ON ME
AND WALK AWAY.
WE NEED TO
TALK ABOUT
IT.

NO. WE DON'T
NEED TO TALK. I AM
YET A MAN, AND MEN
DON'T TALK ABOUT
FEELINGS.

OH, MAXIS.
THIS DRESS IS
HIDEOUS, AND I
DON'T CARE FOR
THIS HAIRSTYLE
AT ALL.



I... CAN'T DISAGREE ON THE DRESS, BUT ABOUT YOU AND DEVIN...?

NO. I WILL NOT SPEAK OF IT. SEND FOR ASRYN.

THEN, YOU CAN HELP ME INTO A NEW DRESS. OH, AND ONE MORE THING.





WHAT WAS THAT FOR?

TO REMIND MYSELF THAT I'M A MAN.



TO BE CONTINUED