

TATIANA CALDWELL

*Say My Name*



## SAY MY NAME

### *Excerpt*

Anna frowned as she walked into the room. The guard had spoken the truth; it was not the same testing room as the evening before.

This one was bigger. And yet it too was filled with straw.

“Don’t tell me I’m supposed to spin all of this straw into gold.”

“Yes, madam, the king expects the room to be full of gold by morning.”

She laughed uncomfortably. What was with this man’s fascination with straw and gold? “More straw, and yet the same number of hours?”

“You should be up to the task. The king has spoiled you on this day.”

Anna scoffed. He hadn’t been spoiling her, he was preparing her for another night of work. Her despise of the king increased twofold as the door was shut and locked, trapping her in a new prison of straw.

She paced the room, wringing her hands together. Instantly, her thoughts went to the magical man who helped her before. “Oh, Goblin, where are you?” she pondered aloud.

“Right beside you,” the deep voice replied.

Anna spun around to face her green-colored savior. “How do you know ahead of time what room he will bring me to?”

“I don’t know ahead of time. I’ve been with you for half the day.”

She narrowed her eyes. “You’ve been spying on me?”

“I prefer to call it watching over you.”

“For what?”

“To ensure no harm comes to you. I do not trust that king.”

She sighed. “Unfortunately, I don’t either.”

“Let me know if you change your mind,” the goblin said, his expression grim, “and wish for me to kill him.”

Anna put her fists on her hips and glared at him. “I said no, Goblin. I don’t want *anyone* to die. Killing is never right.”

“I suppose not.” He shrugged and sighed. “And getting rid of the king without any in line to take the throne *would* throw the entire country into chaos.”

Surprised by his response, Anna looked up at him. “Why do you care about the politics of this country?”

“They affect you, do they not? Therefore, my concern about your well-being extends to your country.”

Anna turned her head so that he could not see her cheeks flush. “You act as if you know me well enough to care that much.”

“I feel as if I do. And what I don’t know about you I desire to learn, if you will allow me.”

“I don’t think I would mind that,” she replied, unable completely to keep a soft smile off her face. “But first I need for my father and me to be freed. And to do that, I believe I should give this lunatic what he wants, regardless of how much I despise it.”

“And how may I help you with that? Tell me what you want me to do, and I will do it.”

“At the moment I need help again spinning gold. Will you do that for me?”

He nodded. “And in return?”

Anna sighed, blowing a few strands of her hair away from her face in the process. Everything in this world seemed to come with a price. But what else did she have that would be of value to this being? She looked down at her right hand. “I have this ring.”

He glanced at it. “It doesn’t appear very valuable. What’s so special about it?”

“It was my ma-ma’s.” She paused to finger it with nostalgia and sadness. “She gave it to me on my sixteenth birthday, moments before she passed away.”

Goblin hesitated, and she could see a sympathetic shadow cross his face, as if he too were saddened by her loss. Her heart lurched at the unspoken sentiments of this mystical non-human. She did not flinch away as he approached her, his eyes locked on the ring. He took her hand in his and lifted it to his face.

“Then with my sincerest appreciation I will accept this ring as payment,” he said. He pulled the ring off and then placed a kiss upon the finger from whence it came.

Anna did not know what gave this being the right to put his hands and mouth on her whenever the urge struck him. But more importantly, she did not know why she was tolerant of it.

And aroused by it, even. So very, thoroughly aroused.

When he took her finger between his thick, moist lips and suckled it, she gasped as the

sensation jolted her. Her hand trembled but he steadied it, drew it deeper into his mouth and sucked it harder, all the while backing her into a corner. She clutched at his shoulders to hold herself up on her wobbling legs, and he slid a knee between her thighs to anchor her against the wall. Warmth and moisture flooded there, and an aching in her gut soon followed. A soft groan escaped from her lips.

He removed his lips from her finger so that he could clasp them upon her mouth.

Both her body and mind whirled. She only just met this wild man a day ago, yet felt trusting of his words, comfortable pressed against him, and open for his kiss. And with crazy, blind abandon she passionately kissed him back, grabbing hold of the back of his spiky hair.

“I don’t even have a name to call you by,” she rasped.

“Then give me one,” he breathed into her mouth.