

need some perspective on yourself."

"And you're going to give it to me, whether I want it or not."

She was still smiling, a good sign.

Kris smiled right back, fearlessly meeting the daunting blue.

"Something like that, yeah."

The Berkshires in late spring.

"Is that Mount Greylock?"

Diana glanced up from the score in her lap and out the window of the moving bus. "Mmhm. Remind you of anything?" she tossed out as an afterthought before returning her attention to the music.

"Well...sure. That's kind of an obvious... I mean the Grand Tetons are even named after--"

"God, you have a one-track mind."

Kris shrugged and showed her dimples.

Diana sighed. "Melville. He saw something quite different."

"Ah," a light went on behind those gloriously green eyes. "He would...sure, when it's covered with snow...had a thing for Hawthorne you know. They had a famous meeting...up there in a cave, taking shelter from a rainstorm..."

"And, Dr. Freud, sometimes a whale is just a whale."

"A great white sperm whale named Dick?"

"Point taken. Never know where you'll find your inspiration,"

Diana said with a soft sigh.

"Where do you find it?"

"I'll assume you're asking me the subject of the opera."

"Okay," Kris readily agreed with a grin.

"It's...uh...a subject from mythology..."

Arethusa ran...they were getting closer, she was tiring. They were hunting her down, running her to ground like the golden hind she had sought to protect in the name of her patron. She had been Chosen, for her purity of heart as much as her beauty. The goddess had blessed her, smiled upon her...loved her. A tall woman with midnight hair and piercing eyes...to be touched by such a goddess...it was sublime. She had followed the Huntress and never looked back. There was a wild freedom in the forest, her heart and soul pledged to her goddess, to Artemis. Abjuring the company of men.

The young woman had stopped to bathe in a silver river after the thrill of the chase, but the god of the river caressed silently and coveted her for himself. She sensed his presence and intent and fled becoming the quarry of the jealous earthy spirit and his minions. She was chased relentlessly all the way from Greece to Sicily. Tiring--though an amazon, she was but mortal--she called out in desperation to her goddess to save her. Thus, the earth was cleft so deeply, a cavern opened under the ground running between the two countries. Thus, she was transformed into the sacred spring in Sicily that bears her name. Holy ground, sacred to Artemis from which the goddess bends to drink. Greek flowers are seen arising from beneath the spring where they have been thrown in by a grieving lover. Forever bubbling and frothy. Ever replenished, filling and refilling, spilling over, gushing forth...eternal."

Kris swallowed. "That's some...symbolism you're working through