

ACKNOWLEDGING
MEIRION



ZENOBIA
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No acknowledgment—but is true love the exception?

Meirion Flatt is one of a handful of people participating in the human version of a nature show for an alien race known as the Fey. Kiar, one of the three men chosen to film her, has awakened emotions in her she hasn't felt since her husband died. She can't tell if the feelings are mutual or one-sided, but she's willing to find out.

Kiar takes great pride in doing his job correctly and that pride means everything to him. The network he works for has a strict rule of no acknowledgment. He's meant to observe, not interact—no matter what. When Meirion sets out to seduce him, his job becomes that much harder.

Love's battlefield has gotten two new contenders and losing just isn't an option.

Two of the universe's most stubborn people are about to clash in a new battle of the sexes. This competition has no rules and neither Meirion nor Kiar is willing to lose. It's her heart versus his pride. Will victory lead to joint happiness or both their defeats as Kiar struggles against... Acknowledging Meirion

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MEIRION

By

Zenobia Renquist



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Chapter One

Meirion shut off the shower and waited.

Nothing happened.

She shook her head. “Must be hearing things.”

She reached for the hot water nozzle when a faint thumping reached her ears. Someone was knocking at her door. “Damn it. He’s early. He should know better than to show up to a woman’s house for a date early. Idiot,” she grumbled as she climbed out the shower, wrapped herself in a towel and trudged out of the bathroom.

The knocking got louder and more urgent.

“I’m coming, damn it. Hold on.” She glared behind her. “It’d be a great help if one of you guys could get the door.”

No answer, just a blank stare. She didn’t know why she bothered talking to the men. They never said anything. She yanked open the door, ready to lay into her boyfriend for showing up early but he wasn’t the one standing on the other side.

“Who are you and what do you want?”

The nervous looking teen fidgeted as he tried to think of what to say.

“I just climbed out of a warm shower to answer this door. You better have a damn good reason for disturbing me.”

“I... uh... well, that is... my buddies and I—”

“Spit it out already!”

“You’ve got a Fey in there, right? You’re one of the ones being watched, right? My buddies said they saw them come out of your house the other day. I just wanted to see one. Please?” He peered over her shoulder trying to see inside the house.

Meirion forced a fake smile. She was used to this. Ever since the Fey put her under surveillance, everyone around her was curious to see and talk to them. She’d had her shadows for two years and the Fey had lived on Earth for five. People should be used to them by now, but no. Idiots like the one on her doorstep still existed.

She said in a sweet voice, “I’m not dressed for company, otherwise I’d let you in.”

“Yeah, I’m sorry about that. I saw your car in the drive—”

“If you just wait here, I’ll get dressed and be right back. Okay?”

“You mean it?”

“Sure do. Stay right here. I won’t be long.” She closed the door and rolled her eyes. “Putz.” She went to the kitchen, picked up the phone and dialed the cops. They received so many calls from her in the last two years that they’d given her a direct line.

“Evening, Ms. Flatt, is this a social call?”

“Got another one for you, Tony.”

“That’s what I thought. I’ll have Sam and Fred out there in no time. Front porch?”

“Standing there like a dope, as usual. I can’t believe the dumb ass really thinks I’ll let him in my house. Since I know he won’t leave if left to his own cognizance, I thought the police could help him along.”

“That’s what we’re here for.”

“Tell Sam and Fred I said thanks.”

“Will do, have a good night.”

Meirion hung up the phone and waited. Not ten minutes later, a patrol car siren filtered through her windows. She went to the front door and peeked out the side window. Sam and Fred had arrived and were carting away her nosy teen, who fought them the whole way.

She opened her door and watched with a smile on her face, genuine this time. “That never gets old.” She leaned against the doorjamb. Movement behind her made her glance over her shoulder. One of her shadows had come up behind her so he could watch the teen be shoved into the back of the patrol car and driven away.

“You guys are a pain in my ass, I hope you know that. Following me all the

time isn't giving you an accurate representation of my life since people act funny around you.”

The man didn't answer.

In fact, he wouldn't answer. In the two years she'd lived with the three Fey, none of them had said word one to her. They weren't allowed. Their job was to film her, that's it. She was a participant in the human version of a nature show and the viewers on a different planet were light years away.

She had three “cameramen” and they watched her on ten-hour shifts. Night or day, awake or asleep, at home or out—they watched her every move unless she was using the toilet. The home viewers weren't interested in human waste disposal. Hiding on the toilet was her only option for privacy and she used it. She wasn't the only one. Several of the other observees did the same when they realized their shadows wouldn't follow them and watch.

Sam and Fred waved at her and she closed the door. A quick glance at the cable box clock showed she had fifteen minutes until Allen's arrival. He'd better be on time too. She was supposed to make him wait not vice versa.

She glanced at the clock again. Three more hours and Kiar would arrive for his shift. While all of the Fey were good looking, she thought Kiar was the most handsome one she'd ever seen.

Her co-workers felt Eiliv, her current shadow, was the better looking of the

three she'd gotten. They only liked his silver hair. The man had silver growing out of his head and it flowed down his back to his calves. He wore it in a long braid at all times. She'd never seen him take it down.

The silver complimented his dark purple skin and deep, true blue eyes. Actually, his eyes changed colors, going from true blue to dark blue. Meirion had yet to figure out a pattern or if it was based on emotions or what. She couldn't ask since he wouldn't answer.

She checked the impulse to tweak the man's long, pointed ears. It was a constant urge whenever she looked at a Fey's ears. The points extended well above the tops of their heads and she'd been curious of their flexibility since the first time she saw a Fey. She wondered if heavy earrings would make their ears droop.

Eiliv stared at her with his unblinking gaze as she looked him over. She said with a mischievous grin, "One of these days I'm going to shave you bald and cash your hair in for a new car."

One more glance at the clock. "But not today." She rushed back to her room with Eiliv following.

She yanked off her towel and tossed it into the bathroom then went in search of the perfect panty and bra set to go with her off-the-shoulder, knee-length party dress.

Being naked in front of Eiliv didn't bother her. Neither did the idea of

thousands of home viewers seeing her naked. They were all Fey. No one on Earth got to see the footage her shadows recorded. It had taken her a year to get used to them watching her in the shower. Their lack of reaction helped.

She stopped noticing them after a while and went on with her life. That didn't stop her from teasing them every now and then. Someone told her she'd get the guards at Buckingham palace to talk before a Fey shadow. While true, that didn't stop her from trying.

“What do you think? The blue or the green?” She held one bra in front of her chest and then the other.

Eiliv said nothing and gave no outward reaction.

She turned to the mirror and did the swap again. “I don't even know why it matters since Allen won't see them anyway.”

But Kiar will, said a little voice in the back of her head.

“Green,” she answered herself.

To match Kiar's hair. How cute. You've been wearing a lot of green lately.

She ignored her inner teasing and finished dressing.

Allen arrived right on time. Meirion sat him on her bed while she styled her hair. “Where are we going?” she called.

“A club I found. Great music and fantastic food.”

“I'm not overdressed, am I?”

“You’re perfect,” he replied near her bathroom door.

She looked at him and he smiled at her.

Allen was an old friend from her college days. He’d admitted to having a crush on her way back then but didn’t want to make her choose between her then boyfriend and him.

Ten years later, Allen had matured in personality and looks. He wore his brown hair in a short cut instead of a disheveled, shoulder-length mass. He’d traded too-big jeans that rode his hips and baggy shirts for the corporate suit-and-tie image.

Even when he dressed down, like now, his jeans stayed at his waist and his shirts fit. He liked showing off the muscular physique his personal trainer helped him achieve, so the baggy clothes were out.

“So...”

“So?”

“Is tall, dark and shiny tagging along too?” he asked.

“Of course, Allen. You knew that already. Actually, Eiliv should only be with us for the first part of the night. Kiar takes over in another three hours.”

“Great.”

Meirion turned away from the mirror and looked at him. “What’s with you? You know I can’t go anywhere without them.”

“I didn’t figure they’d follow you to a crowded club.”

“Is that why you picked a club?” She laughed and shook her head. “Nice try, but it won’t work. I’m not losing them. I’ve tried.”

“They just creep me out. Have you ever seen them blink?”

“Nope. They don’t because of the camera in their left eye. If they blink, then that’s a second of footage they lose.”

“I’ve heard the Fey that don’t have cameras don’t blink either. How the hell do you go through the day and not blink?”

“That’s their species, Allen. Their eyes work different than ours. Just leave it at that and stop obsessing over crap you can’t change. He’s coming and you can’t get rid of him.”

“We’re taking my car.”

“Is that because mine has a camera?”

He didn’t answer but Meirion knew she’d guessed right. She put the finishing touches on her hair then turned to Allen. “Let’s go.”

The trio stepped out of the house and Meirion locked the door. Once at Allen’s car, Meirion got in and Eiliv disappeared—literally. Allen’s look turned satisfied.

Meirion didn’t have the heart to tell him Eiliv wasn’t gone. He’d teleported to the Fey ship while Allen drove Meirion to wherever and then Eiliv would

reappear. His disappearance also meant Allen’s car had been bugged while he waited for her to finish dressing. She wouldn’t mention that either.

“I don’t know how you put up with them,” Allen said.

“Because they are part of the surroundings for me. The only time I notice them is when others make a big deal out of their presence. We’ve been together for five months. You should be used to them too.”

He grunted at her.

“What’s wrong, Allen? You’ve never been this pissy about Eiliv and the others before.”

“One of those freaks is going to watch us when we have sex, right?”

Meirion grinned at him. “If you’re talking about tonight, you’re being awfully optimistic.”

“You said so yourself, we’ve been together for five months.”

“Does sex have an expiration date now?”

“See? The idea of sex in front of those *things* bugs you too.”

“The Fey don’t bother me. You’re the one who’s bothered. And I told you when we first started that I’m not ready for a physical relationship.”

“I get that Eric was the love of your life and you miss him, but it’s been three years. Have you even masturbated in all that time?”

This was not a conversation Meirion wanted to have. Allen knew Eric as a

topic was off-limits. She decided to take a page out of the Fey book and not answer.

“Meirion?”

She stared straight ahead.

Allen sighed and shoved his hand through his hair. “Look, I’m sorry. I love you, Meirion. You may not love me the way you loved Eric, but I’d like to think you at least care deeply for me.”

She looked at him but didn’t answer.

“I’d like to have a physical relationship with you. Please. I’m asking straight out, like a man should. No seduction. No tricks.”

“If you don’t mind me calling out another man’s name then sure. Let’s go for it.”

“Damn it, Meirion, that’s not fair.”

“That’s my life. To answer your question, yes, I’ve masturbated. Every time I touch myself, Eric’s hands are the ones I feel and I call out to him. The one guy I dated before you found out the hard way. I’m trying to spare you the same—myself as well.”

“It might not be that way.”

“Allen, can’t we just enjoy tonight?”

He pulled into the parking lot in front of the club he’d mentioned and shut

the car off. Neither of them moved.

Meirion could feel the tension and Allen’s anger. She did care for him. The emotion was pale compared to what she had felt for her late husband, but it was there—unlike with her last boyfriend.

Maybe Allen was right and that would be the difference. She placed her hand on his arm and he looked at her. With a small smile, she said, “You win. Let’s enjoy the evening then we’ll have fun at my place.”

“Why not mine?”

“One of my shadows will be there regardless of where we go.” She pointed out the window at Eiliv, who stood waiting for them. Several people in the parking lot pointed at him and snapped pictures.

Allen cursed under his breath. “Fine. You know what? I don’t care. If I can be with you, I don’t care who’s watching.”

Meirion leaned over and kissed him. She laughed against his lips when he cursed again. “You really need to learn to ignore them, Allen. They’ll be watching me until my ratings drop. If we have sex tonight, that won’t happen.”

Looks like Allen would see her underwear after all.

Purchasing Information

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Zenobia Renquist (Zen-Ren) is the pseudonym of D. Reneé Bagby. Zen-Ren was invented with the intention of keeping Reneé's Multiverse stories separate from her stand alone stories, thus cutting back on confusion (both hers and the readers).

Reneé is still fairly new to the publishing world but she loves to write and does so at every opportunity. When she isn't writing (because she's at her day job or otherwise away from her computer), Reneé is thinking up stories and characters to write about.

She hopes to have all her story ideas published one day and that they will be enjoyed. Visit her website at <http://dreeneebagby.com> / <http://zenobiarenquist.com> or join her Yahoo! Group http://groups.yahoo.com/group/dreeneebagby_multiverse/ to learn more about Reneé and her works.