

space up to the wall of iron bars and the passage beyond. Farideh walked over and stuck a hand between the bars—the faintest breeze stirred against her fingertips and eddied the hem of her dress. “I think it’s a tunnel,” she said.

She looked back at Dahl, who gaped as if someone had just told him the secrets of the gods. “Tunnels,” he said. “They all sit over the tunnels—how could I have *forgotten* the tunnels?”

Farideh tested the bars—the middle section was hinged, but locked tight. “Smuggling?” she said. “Where do the tunnels go?”

“Everywhere,” Dahl said. “It depends on the—”

The door creaked open, and Dahl sprang at her, pulling her into the farthest corner of the room. A stack of crates hid them from the stairs, but if the intruder came even a step farther, they’d be in plain sight. Farideh pulled Dahl closer, right up against her, right up against the crate behind her—it wouldn’t be enough.

“We got lost,” he said quickly. “We didn’t pay. We’re a little drunk.”

“Right,” said Farideh.

He hesitated for the briefest of moments, his gray eyes considering her mismatched ones. And then he kissed her.

It was not a small kiss, not a chaste kiss—there was no need to fear he wouldn’t believe they were lovers, impatient and impassioned. But to be certain, Farideh pulled Dahl closer, her arms around his neck, and Dahl grabbed hold of her hips. To be certain, she angled her hips into his, and he lifted her up onto the crate. To be certain, his hand slid up her thigh and she drew her leg up his.

What are you doing? a little voice in the back of her thoughts screamed, over and over. What are you doing?