

## The Unlikely Heroine – Book ii by Kae Elle Wheeler

“What do you see?” Lady Pricilla asked from behind. Soft breath whispered across his neck. He closed his eyes, wishing for a force of strength he was sure he did not possess, and willed her to step back.

She didn’t. Mayhap he was losing his powers.

With darkness fast approaching, he searched the far reaches of his mind for a stratagem. None came forth. If he demanded she wait while he investigated the cottage she would be right on his heels. He considered his options—and his companion. He turned to face her in the growing dusk. Her eyes were wide and . . . trusting. Surprise riveted through him, he lifted a hand to push back a wayward strand of her that flaxen hair. If his usual compelling notions did not apply to her, mayhap a more traditional one would work. He narrowed his eyes on those full lips as he recognized the danger of what he was actually contemplating. He was certain to lose this match.

Arnald leaned close to Lady Pricilla’s ear and let out a soft deliberate breath. Her shiver of awareness was his cue. “My lady.” He paused, breathing in that irresistible fragrance of jasmine. “Mayhap, you would be so kind as to wait here?” He spoke softly.

“But—”

“*S’il vous plaît,*” he whispered, drawing one fingertip along her jaw. He suppressed unquenched desire that threatened his control. He wanted to taste that succulent mouth. He settled with brushing his lips along her jaw. Smooth as silk. Knowing he shouldn’t carry it too far was different than being able to actually stop. He worked his way to the lobe of her ear, and suckled gently.

She gasped. It managed to bring his attention back to his dishonorable tactics.

“It could be dangerous. I would ne’er forgive myself should something dreadful happen to you.” Another shiver spoke that she was not so immune as she pretended.

That thought quickened his pulse. Skin, so soft to his touch had him fighting further urges to explore. Unfortunately, now was not the ideal time to dwell on such thoughts.

“You’ll wait, then?” Her hair brushed his cheek with her small nod. “I shall signal you once I feel ’tis safe,” he whispered. Unable to completely resist, he touched his lips to hers, sealing her promise. He lingered there for an eternity unable to draw away. The tip of his tongue touched her lips. Her sharp gasp forced him to pull back, to remember safety and shelter were needed. *Her cooperation was needed.*

Her eyes widened with shock. Not without force of effort, his arms fell to his sides. “This is not finished,” he said harshly.