

## Practical Uses For Princes with Pointed Ears- Excerpt Isabelle Saint-Michael

My dreams were more vivid than usual. It was like I was standing there with my favorite imaginary hunk. He and several others were packing up horses. There was a great deal of laughter and teasing among the men. They poked at each other until finally he had to step in and tell them to calm down. Even as he reprimanded them his smile shone brightly. I had never seen him smile with such a youthful presence.

Moments later another man appeared, just as handsome as my dream guy. "Tallyn!" he called, and my heart skipped a beat as I watched the man of my dreams turn to wave.

"Tallyn," I could feel myself whispering. He turned and looked in my direction, as if he had heard me. His face fell a little when he couldn't see me standing there.

"What's wrong?" the taller man asked him.

I watched as Tallyn shrugged. "I was just thinking about how I was going to have to see your face every morning for the next few days and it quashed all the fun out of our camping trip."

The taller man laughed, only to turn when someone called, "Maerryn!" which I guessed was his name.

I could feel the cool breeze on my skin, causing the hair on my arms to stand up. I watched with interest as the men finished packing up and began to ride away. I followed them through the forest I had seen a hundred times in my dreams. After a few hours they crossed the river in a shallow area then headed up a steep cliff, guiding their horses one at a time along the narrow ledge.

By midday the group reached the top of the cliff and stopped for lunch. The food smelled amazing cooked over the open fire. I felt my stomach rumble. When it did, Tallyn placed a hand on his stomach and looked around with confusion.

He was beautiful to look at, even with uncertainty creasing his brow. His green eyes deepened in color and his breath stilled. It was like he was looking right at me but couldn't see me. With a shake of his head, he rejoined the conversation around him.

They packed up and left, heading across a path at the top of the cliff that led into another forest. The group seemed more hesitant when they entered the new area. They rode close together for hours, and when darkness finally threatened, they found flat ground and made camp. The horses were tied up, dinner was caught and prepared, and then the wine came out.

*Boys will be boys*, I thought to myself as they laughed, sang and passed around the bottles.

Behind me I heard the crack of twigs underfoot. Suddenly, I sensed someone else was there. I turned, looking in the direction of the sound, and I saw shadows moving through the woods towards the encampment. Panic filled me and I tried to scream, but I was just a watcher without a voice.