

# A Court of Thorns and Roses

By Sarah J. Maas

His bite lightened, and his tongue caressed the places his teeth had been. He didn't move- he just remained in that spot, kissing my neck. Intently, territorially, lazily. Heat pounded between my legs, and as he ground his body against me, against every aching spot, a moan slipped past my lips. ...More- I wanted the hardness of his body crushing against mine; I wanted his mouth and teeth and tongue on my bare skin, on my breasts, between my legs. Everywhere- I wanted him everywhere.

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He traced the arc of my hipbones, lingering at the edge of my undergarments. My nightgown had become hitched around my waist, but I didn't care. I hooked my bare legs around his, running my feet down the hard muscles of his calves. He breathed my name onto my chest, one of his hands exploring the plane of my torso, rising up to the slope of my breast. I trembled, anticipating the feel of his hand there, and his mouth found mine again as his fingers stopped just below. His kissing was slower this time- gentler. The fingertips of his other hand slipped beneath the waist of my undergarment, and I sucked in a breath.

...With one long claw, he shredded through silk and lace, and my undergarment fell away in pieces. The claw retracted, and **his kisses deepened as his fingers slid between my legs, coaxing and teasing. I ground against his hand, yielding completely to the writhing wildness that had roared alive inside me,** and breathed his name onto his skin. He paused again- his fingers retracting- but I grabbed him, pulling him further on top of me. I wanted him now- I wanted the barriers of our clothing to vanish, I wanted to taste his sweat, wanted to become full of him. "Don't stop," I gasped out. "I-" he said thickly, resting his brow between my breasts as he shuddered. "If we keep going, I won't be able to stop at all." I sat up and he watched me, hardly breathing. But I kept my

eyes on his, my own breathing becoming steady as I raised my nightgown over my head and tossed it to the floor. Utterly naked before him, I watched his gaze travel to my bare breasts, peaked against the chill night, to my abdomen, to between my thighs. A ravenous, unyielding sort of hunger passed over his face. I bent a leg and slid it to the side, a silent invitation. He let out a low growl- and slowly, with predatory intent, raised his gaze to mine again.

The full force of that wild, unrelenting High Lord's power focused solely on me- and I felt the storm contained beneath his skin, so capable of sweeping away everything I was, even in it's lessened state. But I could trust him, trust myself to weather that mighty power. I could throw all that I was at him he wouldn't balk. "Give me everything," I breathed. He lunged, a beast freed of its tether. We were a tangle of limbs and teeth, I tore at his clothes until they were on the floor, then tore at his skin until I marked him down his back, his arms. **His claws were out, but devastatingly gentle on my hips as he slid down between my thighs and feasted on me,** stopping only after I shuddered and fractured. I was moaning his name when he sheathed himself inside m in a powerful, slow thrust that had me splintering around him. We moved together, unending and wild and burning, an when I went over the edge the next time, he roared and went with me.

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