

Dangerous Desires by Sarah Saltwick

Kitchen. Flora is cooking. Alex is hiding something behind his/her back.

ALEX:

Remember when Mom thought I was possessed by a spirit of brutality? And cunning?

FLORA

I remember you chasing some chickens. Nothing too serious.

ALEX:

Whatever happened to that amulet?

Pause. Flora looks at Alex suspiciously.

FLORA

Why would you want that old thing?

ALEX

I was just...I was going to sell it? Try to make some extra money?

FLORA:

I doubt you could find it.

Alex produces a circle, heavy with keys.

FLORA:

No way!

She grabs the keys.

FLORA

You - scramble those eggs.

Alex takes over at the stove. Flora holds the keys to her chest and then presses them to her face. She shakes them, listening to their noise.

FLORA

Where did you find these?

ALEX

Are they special?

FLORA

Stopping her caressing.

No. Just ordinary. But don't tell Mom you found them.

A fox runs past a window.

FLORA

Did you hear something outside?

ALEX

Nope.

Flora looks lustfully at the keys.

FLORA

Look at all of them. All of you have a lock. Each and every one - you and you and you. They're beautiful.

ALEX

Where should I start looking? For the amulet?

FLORA

To one of the keys.

Hello. Where do you go?

ALEX

I'll start upstairs -

Alex goes for the keys.

FLORA

Don't touch -

The fox peeks its head in.

Alex sees the fox. Alex tries shoos it away. It shakes its head. It sniffs the air.

ALEX

Will you look then?

FLORA

You're not supposed to be left alone.

ALEX
I'll be good.

FLORA
You better be great. I'll be right back - and I'm not promising that I'll find anything -

ALEX
Mom got that amulet for me. It's mine to have - to sell, I mean.

FLORA
You owe me.

*Flora goes upstairs as the fox climbs in the window.
Alex puts the skillet on the ground.*

ALEX
Careful, it's hot.

The fox goes to eat.

ALEX
Aren't you going to say thank you?

FOX
Thank you.

ALEX
She'll be back.

FOX
No, she'll be busy for a while. Wanna touch my tail?

They look at each other.

ALEX
I'm going to get in trouble...

FOX
I like you best when you're tough.

Flora yells.

FLORA

Offstage

Hey I found something!

ALEX

Quick, hide!

The fox hides.

Flora enters.

FLORA

Passports.

ALEX

Are they yours?

FLORA

Well, no. But look at them - I think they are -

ALEX

You should put them back. You'll get in trouble.

FLORA

You don't want to see the stamps?

The fox growls.

ALEX

Go look for the amulet!

FLORA

If I find it, I'm keeping it!

Flora stomps off.

FOX

I thought about you in my burrow last night.

ALEX

Do you think this is going to work?

FOX

It has to.

ALEX
I'm nervous.

Fox smiles.

FOX
You can always change back.

ALEX
I won't want to. Nothing's better.

FOX
You know it's forbidden.

ALEX
I don't care what other people think. I know what I want.

FOX
Everyone who thinks they know better. But they don't. They don't know what it's like to run wild on silent paws. Have beautiful fur. Wake up and pounce on mice. The only thing I mind is the loneliness.

ALEX
You wouldn't be lonely anymore.

ALEX & FOX
I dream about it everyday.

Flora enters carrying several magic objects in her hands.

FLORA
What's going on here?

Fox drops to all fours. Growls.

FLORA
Stop it.

ALEX
You found it? Let me have it -

FLORA
I'm telling Mom!

ALEX
I need a change.

FLORA
Get a haircut.

ALEX
A big change.

FLORA
You're not ready -

Fox growls.

ALEX
It's all I think about. Every day, every moment, the thought consumes more and more of me. I know it's forbidden -

FLORA
It will destroy you -

Fox jumps at her and grabs one of the amulets. Fox brings it to Alex.

FLORA
Stop - wait - Alex!! You're not ready - amateur!

Alex grabs it. Holds it to his/her chest. Quickly whispers magic words. And turns into...a bear! A very scary big bear!

FOX
Bear! Bear!

FLORA
Oh god - Bear -

*Flora casts a spell with one of the other objects. Bear Alex turns into a AlexFish.
Fox starts to sneak off.*

FLORA
Looking at AlexFish
Now I have to make a whole extra trip to the lake.

FLORA

Not so fast!

Using one of the other amulets, Flora casts a spell and turns Fox into a person.

FOX

Changing into a person

No - I don't want to be - Not fair --

(As a person)

Turn me back -

FLORA

Nope, I've put you back in your right body. You stay in it. Don't wander into something else.

FOX

How did you know I wasn't a real -

FLORA

Real foxes are solitary creatures.

FOX

I don't want to be a person. I miss my tail.

FLORA

Pull it together.

FOX

It's no fun being a person.

(Fox looks at its hands, disappointed)

These are terrible for snow.

FLORA

We've missed you around here.

FOX

Ha. I bet Mom didn't even know I was gone.

FLORA

She always keeps track of her students.

FOX

I doubt it.

Flora shows off the key ring.

FLORA

If you look long enough, you can find the drawer she keeps on you. It's filled with your secrets. I've narrowed mine down to -

She holds up more than half the keys.

FLORA

These.

FOX

Can I hold those?

FLORA

No.

FOX

Just for a second.

FLORA

NO!

Flora takes a deep breath.

FLORA

I'm going to find that drawer if it's the last thing I do -

FOX

Isn't it forbidden?

FLORA

I don't care what other people think. I know what I want.

AlexFish is flopping. Both look at him.

FOX

Are you going to change him back?

FLORA

I don't know where the de-fishing diamond is.

FOX

Do something?

She looks at the other magic objects. Tries a spell. AlexFish jumps higher, with gusto.

FOX

That's a little better.

They watch.

FLORA

Don't tell Mom about this.