

# AADAM

KRAMPUS BROTHERS IN LAS VEGAS



MARSHA BLACK

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ISBN:

Aadam lets out a sigh of contentment as he pounds the last fence post into the ground, fortifying the magical barrier of the part of the forest that he now claims as his home. Leaning back, he stretches his body, easing the aches and pains that have tormented him throughout the day as he worked on this arduous task.

Kitten, a gray and black husky runs up, and circles around Aadam's heels, almost knocking him over as he tries to make his way to the rocking chair calling his name from the front porch. Laughing, he reaches down and rubs the dog's head, making Kitten yelp in excitement. Aadam reaches down and grabs a stick from the ground and tossing it, freeing his legs from the little runt.

As Kitten takes off after the stick, Aadam quickly makes his way to the porch, grabbing the ice-cold lemonade sitting on the table next to the chair as he settles in to look over the land and animals. He takes a swig, smacking his lips at the delicious coolness of the drink as he smiles, eyes

crinkling in the corner as Puppy, a Maine Coon kitten he found in an alley near one of the more popular Casino's.

After all his years of traveling, trying to find some place that he might actually fit in, he decided to take of residence in Las Vegas after coming across Kitten. Aadam was wandering around, thinking about how he can control the special abilities he was born with, when hiding under a park bench, there was a beautiful husky. As Aadam drew closer, he saw blood covering its fur. Rushing over, he saw that it was missing a leg, a trail of blood leading away from the animal. Heart aching for the poor thing he took off his flannel shirt, wrapped it around the puppy and made his way through the forest where he could feel a magical essence coming from.

After nursing the puppy, Aadam makes his way into town a few days later to buy supplies to build a doghouse, when he came across the Maine Coon kitten that had cuts all over its body and was missing an eye. Cradling the scared kitten in his arms, he heads back to the forest, putting off the items he went into town for.

Running low on both food and patience, Aadam was unsure of what to do. There was currently no place within the forest that he could keep the two healing animals apart, they were both too scared to be left alone for long, much less together. With no other possibility coming to mind, he decided to tap into his cloning ability.

Aadam doesn't care to use his cloning ability, which came from his fathers, Krampus' side, because with each clone made, it looks less human and more demon like. He closes his eyes, swallowing back bile as he conjures a mirror image of himself in his mind's eye. Goosebumps form over his arms as he opens his eyes, staring into a duplicate of himself, only with red eyes and pointy ears. "Keep watch on the kitten and puppy; only get close to them if you need to." Aadam orders it. The clone gives him an a okay gesture with his hands, confirming it understood the orders given.

Quickly taking his leave, he hightails it out of the forest, making his way to a hardware shop. Buying bricks, mortar, wood, glass, insulation, flooring and many more items,

he conjures the money he needs for his purchases that made the store owners eyes flash dollar symbols.

While the owner bags up the smaller items, Aadam makes his way outside, looking up and down the street to confirm there are no spying eyes as he conjures a truck to haul his load back to the forest.

“Do you need some help loading everything up?” The owner asks.

“No thank you; I’m good.” Aadam responds as he grabs up over 200 pounds worth of items, carrying them nonchalantly outside. Wide-eyed, the owner can only stare silently in awe.

Making a couple trips in and out, Aadam finally has everything loaded up and drives back towards his clone and the waiting animals.

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Smiling at the memories, he stands from the rocking chair and makes his way into the house and towards the kitchen to cook up some grub. A frown mars his face as he swipes the hair off the back of his neck when he sees yet another injured animal at the magical barrier, this one being a young fawn with an arrow stuck in its rump.

Laying down the knife he was using to fix a sandwich, he walks out of the kitchen and house towards the fawn. With a snap of his fingers, an opening appears, allowing the animal entry into Aadam’s safe haven. Biting back a curse word at the close up visual of the poor creature, he slowly walks over, crooning softly to get it to follow him to a makeshift emergency care unit located between the barrier and his house.

Once they both make their way into the unit, Aadam gathers all the necessary items in order to care for the fawn’s wound. Yanking the arrow out, he quickly grabs alcohol, dousing the wound before quickly covering it with towels. The arrowhead appears to be specially designed, leaving a larger

wound than normal arrows would, so using a bit of telekinesis; he holds the towels in place while he walks over to a suturing kit in order to stitch up the wound from bleeding out.

Disposing of the bloody cloths, Aadam tapes some gauze over the stitches to lessen chances of infection as he encouragingly pats the fawn on the back. “Well done, young fawn. Feel free to stay here until you’ve recovered.”

Walking over to the washbasin he rinses the blood from his hands before walking outside. His walk quickly turns into a run as he hears Kitten barking wildly. Stopping for a mere second to concentrate on the direction that the barking is coming from, he pivots to the left, leaving a trail of dust in his wake as his feet pound heavily upon the ground.

Shocked, he trips over his feet, falling ungainly face first into the ground as a petite figure races past him, Kitten hot on the person’s trail. Jumping up, he turns and chases after them, quickly gaining ground, tackling the figure as he draws close enough to do so.

“Oomph!” A feminine exclamation gasps out as the breath is knocked out of the both of them from the hard landing.

Grabbing the person’s wrists in a vice grip, he stands, pulling the petite frame to their feet as well. Natty and tangled hair covers their face as their body shakes in fear, panting out gasps of air before they faint.

Deftly sweeping the body into his arms, he carries it to his house, unsure if he just might live to regret bringing someone into his haven.

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Opening her eyes, Sariah scurries into a huddle in the corner of the massive bed she was lying in. Eyes frantically searching for an escape route, she whimpers in fear as she sees a man with long hair, deep brown eyes and a scowl pulling his otherwise attractive face into a slightly less attractive one.

“Are you alright?” He asks in a deep baritone, seducing the airwaves as they make it to her ears. She yanks the blankets over her, afraid of the longing that flowed through her.

Peeking out of over the blanket at the sound of the floorboards creaking, she watches as he draws closer. The dim light illuminates him for a moment, allowing her the alluring glimpse of his red and green aura.

“What are you?” Sariah asks, curiosity getting the best of her fear.

Surprise flickers in his eyes, not many people can tell he’s not human, unless he makes it known. “What do you mean?” He questions cautiously.

“You’re definitely not human...you don’t have the scent of a shifter and you don’t reek of blood like a vamp.” She tilts her head, eyeing him up and down. “So, what are you?” Seeing his wary expression, makes what little fear from earlier dissipate.

“Well, what are you then?” He shoots back, causing a smile to break out over her face.

“Guess.”

“What?” Frustrated, he runs his hands through his dark hair.

“I’m not human, but not many can guess what I actually am. So, I’m curious as to whether you may surprise me.”

“Grr,” he growls out, not a fan of guessing games, yet not willing to tell what he is, either. “Whatever, why and how did you get here?” He watches as she looks around the cabin.

“No idea, last I remember is getting tackled and then dragged to might feet.” She retorts, growing bored of the mundane questions. “Why? Is there something special about this place?” Excitement enters her tone at the thought.

“None of your business. Now who are you and what were you running from? You seemed awfully scared.”

Sighing she tosses the blanket off her and gets out of the bed, standing toe to toe with him. “Why should I bother answering your questions, when you aren’t answering any of mine?”

He glares down at her, “Because you’re in my house, on my part of the land, and I can throw you out and time I feel like it. Good enough reason for you?”

Mulling it over she gives a shrug and backs away a little, “Fair enough. My name is Sariah and I was running away from a Cupid.”

“A Cupid? Seriously?” He scoffs. “Most people and beings want Cupids to turn their attention to them, so why are you running from one?”

“You wouldn’t believe me if I told you,” She waves the question away with a gesture. “So, I’ve introduced myself, now who are you?”

“The name is Aadam and I’ve only been living here a short while.”

“So, Aadam, why are you holed up here instead of living in a normal place?”

“That’s a bit too personal for a first meeting when neither of us really trusts one another. Let’s just say, I’m living here and bringing in and taking care of injured creatures I come across. Some are born deformed and are tortured because of it, others are injured because they are weaker, and the most disgusting of all, is when the creatures are injured by the cruel nature of humans.”

Sariah’s heart melts a little at seeing this endearing side to such a tough looking guy. “Quite impressive. Would you mind if I stay here for a while, until Cupid is no longer searching for me?”

Waving his arm to encompass the cabin he looks incredulously at her, “Are you kidding? Do you see how tiny this place is? Plus, it’s not appropriate for us to stay together, especially since there’s only one bed.”

“No worries, you won’t want to do anything with me anyways.” She states, eyes downcast.

Giving her a once over, he can’t argue with that. Her clothes are barely hanging on, her hair is either brown or appears dark in color because it hasn’t been washed in who knows how long. Her eyes appear to be her most interesting feature, one eye is a teal color while the other is purple.

Unable to argue with her statement, he walks over to his chest of drawers and pulls out some clothing that might fit her. He tosses them to her, “Shower is outside and at the right side of the cabin. Go get cleaned up.” He heads outside to see what Kitten and Puppy are up to, leaving Sariah to shower and change.

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Why in the world would Sariah run from a Cupid? Cupids are known to help others find their true loves, something everyone wants. So, what has her fleeing in fear of one? Aadam muses as he pets Kitten. “Do you know, boy?” He questions, hoping the puppy might be able to shed some light on the reason.

Jumping up from his kneeled position at the sound of footsteps coming up behind him, he turns to see Sariah, hair still a mess, eliciting a bark of laughter from him.

Shoving some of the hair away from her face she glares at him. “Hold on a minute,” he calls out as he heads into the house, returning shortly with a brush in hand. “Here, see if you can do something with that rat’s nest.”

Swiping the brush angrily out of his hand, she storms away, as she runs the brush through her hair, yelping at the tug of each and every knot it encounters. Wincing she clenches her teeth, determined to tame the hair that has caused her so many issues.

“Need some help?” Aadam sneaks up on her amidst her cursing, causing her to jump and drop the brush. Aadam



laughs at the sight of the brush dangling from her mop of hair, tangled wildly in the strands.

Letting out a frustrated sigh she concedes, “Please. I’ll never be able to prevent myself from getting angry, fed up and giving up before I can get through even half of it.” Sariah tilts her head in his direction.

“Let’s head inside so that you can at least sit down while I brush through it. Can also give you something to clamp your teeth on if it gets too painful for you.” Aadam offers, all too aware of how bad brushing hair can be through a mess of long hair, which is why he makes sure to keep his up or brushed through often enough to keep from getting too tangled.

“Thanks.” Sariah responds, appreciative of his concern as they head into the cabin together.

Aadam pulls out a chair from the kitchen table and waits for her to sit before working on untangling the brush from her hair in order to free it. Separating her hair into four parts, or at least as much as he’s able to, he begins to slowly and gently tug through the knots until he can swipe the brush through the whole length, which reaches just above her waist. Finishing up through her whole head of hair, Aadam places the brush on the counter and backs away.

Hearing his footsteps moving away, she opens her eyes that were closed throughout the process. Cautiously running her hands through her hair she’s surprised that her fingers passed through smoothly. Jumping out of the chair, she rushes to a wall mirror hanging in the bathroom staring in awe at the sight of her hair hanging smoothly down her back.

“How in the world did you do that?” She utters.

“I just brushed it,” He responds, confused as to why that would be something needing to be asked.

“Yes, I know you brushed it, but how...” She runs her fingers once more through her hair. “My hair never untangles, much less gets this straight and slightly.”

“I have no idea what you mean?” Aadam declares before getting distracted by Puppy trying to climb his leg. He reaches over and cradles him in his arms, rubbing his fingers gently under his chin, making him purr.

Deciding she’s getting nowhere with him, she changes the subject, “So, how many creatures do you have here?”

“Let’s see...if you count Puppy and Kitten, there are about twenty roaming around. I have a couple of wild animals in cages because they’re either too bad off right now to be let out around the others, or because they’re too rabid to be allowed out around the others.”

“These poor creatures. If you’re willing to let me hang around, I can assist you in taking care of them all.” Sariah cajoles, knowing that staying on this land is her best bet to get off the Cupids radar.

“Look Sariah, I get where you’re coming from, but this may not be the safest place for you. I can’t guarantee your safety around the animals, and as I mentioned before, my place is small...where would you even stay?”

“Well, would it hurt if we create a small cabin for me? Even if it’s a shack, I’d be fine with that, and I don’t need you to guarantee my protection from the animals, I can handle myself.”

Aadam lets out a scoff, “Really? Only thing I can picture you taking care of is turning the pages of a book.”

Owlishly looking at him she regards him closely, “My glasses fell and broke before I even got here, so how do you know I’m into books?”

“I can smell it on you, the scent of books. It’s so strong that it’s easy to tell you’re around them a lot and if you’re around them a lot, then it’s easy to assume that you read them often.”

“Once again, I’m going to ask...what are you?” Sariah’s fear starts to return. If he can tell something like that so easily, how long would it take for him to figure out what she is.

“Let’s just say that you are betting off not knowing.”  
He states mysteriously.

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Second guessing if she’s truly safer here than up against the Cupid, the red and black aura coming off Adam catches her eye again, firming her decision to stay. “I’ll handle myself, just let me stay for a couple of weeks, then I’ll get out of your hair.”

Eyeing her over, he senses a new determination coming off from her. Curiosity about her rises and a bout of loneliness hits him, eliciting an agreement from him, “Fine, you can stay...but only on the condition that neither your or any animals get hurt, and if I tell you to leave me alone, you do so. No questions asked.”

“Eek! Thank you so much!” Sariah jumps up and down excitedly. “Do you happen to have any books off hand?” She asks, looking around the cabin once more.

“No. Books aren’t a necessity, so I don’t own any.”

Gasping, her hands cover her heart as if it’s in pain from his words. “You beast! Who wouldn’t consider books a necessity? It’s a ghastly thought.”

“Sure, whatever. I’m going to go and check the border, make sure we don’t have any unnecessary guests lurking about, trying to find their way in, like you somehow managed to.” Aadam heads out, Kitten trailing after him as he makes his way to the border of the magical barrier to check for any injured creatures that have made their way to him and for any sighting of a Cupid.

“Kitten, what do you think of Sariah? Something seems off about her, you know. She seems afraid one minute, then confident and yet she seems surprised by a lot of things that seem normal to me.” Aadam sits on a stump as he talks with Kitten, who responds with a wagging tail and tongue hanging out.

“Then again, I guess I can’t complain too much. I can just imagine her reaction to finding out who I’m a child from.” Kitten licks Aadam’s hand in sympathy. “Because of whom both of my parents are, even children of other supernatural and mythical beings steer clear of me. My own half siblings barely acknowledge me, so why wouldn’t this odd bookish woman do the same as others.”

“Maybe because she is also shunned by others.” Sariah sneaks up on Aadam, scaring the bejesus out of him.

“Holy shiznit, Sariah!” Aadam jumps up, heart racing as he turns around to face her. “You shouldn’t sneak up on a man like that! You’re lucky my first instinct wasn’t to beat the crapola out of you.”

A smile brightens her face, making the weird coloring of her eyes shine beautifully, “Shiznet? Crapola? What are you, five?” Laughter breaks free and its musical notes calm his frantic heart and pulls at his lips.

“Only at heart,” He answers. “Growing up with constant cursing, I came to hate those types of words, so I came up with my own to use instead.”

“Oh my, I think I’m going to need to stick around just to see what other words you came up with in place of cursing.” Sariah teases. “To be honest, hearing a grown man say shiznet and crapola totally make up for my running from Cupid.”

“Whoa! Hey now, don’t go getting any ideas that I’ll actually allow you to stay once Cupids no longer on your trail. At the first sign of it losing interest, you’re outta her. Capiche?”

“Yea, yea, whatever you say Mr. Kid.” Sariah turns and walks away, leaving Aadam flabbergasted at her audacity. No one has ever spoken to him the way she does and he doesn’t quite know what to make of it.

Plopping back onto the stump, he shakes his head, “Kitten, what in the supernatural world did I get myself into?” He shakes his head before gathering his thoughts together.

“Let’s get the facts straight according to what we know so far.”

1. Sariah is not human
2. A Cupid is after her
3. Cupids help you find your other half
4. Brushing Sariah’s hair was a shock to her for some reason
5. Sariah is afraid of Cupids
6. Sariah’s different colored eyes are captivating

“Wait, what? Kitten, forget that last one, I have no friggin’ idea where that even came from.” Kitten lets out a little yip. “Boy, do I wish I knew what you were saying, our conversations would go a whole lot better.” Aadam jokes, ruffling Kittens fur.

Aadam looks up at the sky, noticing it darkening through the leaves of the tree. “Let’s head home girl, it’s about time for dinner.” Getting up once more from his seat on the stump, they make their way to the cabin to see what’s there to make for dinner.

“Sariah, are you hungry?” Aadam calls out as he walks into the cabin and heads towards the fridge and cabinets in search of what’s available. Silence is his response. “Sariah?” He calls out once more, worry starting to fill him.

A floorboard to the right of him creaks as Sariah jumps out of the shadows of a corner. “Boo!”

“Lame.” Aadam responds as he turns back to the cabinets. “What do you want to eat? I don’t have a lot since it’s only me here, so if nothing works, I’ll have to head out to the store.” He moves away, allowing her access to view what’s available. She then walks over to the fridge and checks there.

“Aadam, please tell me this isn’t what you live off of? This is like the bare minimum for a single person. Ramen, Beefaroni, Tuna Fish, Steak and water.” She looks disbelievingly over him. “Grab me a pen and paper so I can make a grocery list for you.”

Aadam does as she asks, confused as to why what he has available isn't good enough. "What's wrong with what's here?"

"What isn't wrong is more like it. You need more variety. Potato's, vegetables, fruits, pasta, etc. Gosh, is this what men normally live off of?"

"Well, I don't know about others, but when it's just me, this is perfectly acceptable. It's quick, easy and filling. What more could I ask for?" Aadam declares defensively, even as he walks over to a stand next to bed, grabbing a small notepad and pen for her.

"Ok, well that's all going to change now that I'm here. I want you to get everything on my list and I'll fix dinner when you get back. Trust me, you'll love everything I make, even though it takes more than a few minutes to fix, unlike everything you have in this place to fix."

Aadam walks away, feeling oddly hurt. What does she expect, a single man who resides in a small cabin and takes care of injured creatures...is there really much time left in the day to worry about spending a lot of time on fixing food?

"Here. Don't forget, I want everything on the list." Sariah hands him the notepad back.

Reading it over, "You eat toothbrushes, clothes and ChapStick?"

"No, dummy! When you tackled me, did it seem like I had anything on me other than the clothes I was wearing? I need a few necessities in order to stay here."

"What if the Cupid is in town looking for some random person to go and buy feminine items. It could catch its attention and it could follow me back here and right to you." Aadam states logically.

"Crap on wheat toast!" Sariah exclaims, surprised she hadn't thought of that.

Laughter consumes Aadam, "Crap on what?!"

Sariah stares wide-eyed at him, “Nevermind that, I guess just go grab some food for today and a toothbrush... we’ll have to figure out something else for clothing.”

“But you totally didn’t curse and used some other phrase instead like I do, and yet you get to tease me and I can’t return the favor?”

“Nope, forget it and get out of here. I’m starting to get hangry so mind your own business before things start to get ugly,” Sariah mocks.

“Yea, yea, whatever you say. Anyways, stay in the cabin while I’m out. You don’t know the lay of the land and I don’t want you getting lost.” Aadam warns as he heads out.

As he reaches the magical border, he creates multiple clones of himself to guard the land. “Space out evenly around the circling barrier for any signs of injured creatures or unwanted guests. Sariah is the first being that has easily entered this land since I took up residence here, but I want to make sure that no one else is able to do so.” He orders before walking through the barrier and heading to where he hid his truck.

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Sariah takes a seat on the bed as she tries to calm her racing heart. She’s gotten so relaxed and comfortable around Aadam that she somehow managed to forget the Cupid that is after her. She can’t have it catch her; she can’t have some poor unfortunate soul be claimed as her soul mate. Because of whom and what she is, it’s a death sentence for anyone to be with her.

Puppy jumps onto the bed with her, curling up in her lap, purring as Sariah pets his soft fur. “What will Aadam do to me when he finds out? Then again, maybe he won’t. I can’t be around others of the opposite sex for X amount of time or they’ll be affected. The sad part is that each guy is different, so I have to keep an eye on the warning signs.”

Puppy nips at Sariah's fingers as she quiets, stares off and stops petting him. "Ouch! You little stinker!" She laughs as she stands and twirls around the room, holding him high in the air. "Let's go for a walk, I don't want to be cooped up in here any longer."

Puppy hisses at her as she heads towards the door. Shocked, she takes a step back, "What is it?" She asks, before slapping herself upside the forehead. "Duh, Aadam told me to stay in the cabin to avoid any potential danger." She kneels down to rub under his chin, "Is that why you're blocking me from leaving?" The cat meows at her in response.

"Fine, fine. I'll sit and rot here from boredom if that's what you want." Sariah concedes, not really wanting to squabble with a cat. Cats in her opinion are one of hells minions, sent to earth to train humans to do anything and everything for them, in preparation of hell, which is ruled by not a fallen angel, but a humanoid feline.

Watching as Sariah backs away and sits back on the bed, Puppy fluffs up his tail and walks haughtily to the back wall where a bowl of cat food sits. As he eats, Sariah quickly jumps up and with nimble steps, makes her way out of the cabin. Slapping her hands together in a job well done manner, she takes a look around the forested area debating on which area she wants to check out first.

Closing her eyes, lifting her arm out in front of her and pointing a fingers she spins round and round until she gets dizzy. Facing the direction or where her finger points she steadies her feet before opening her eyes. Taking a cautious step forward, slowly one after another until she's steady on her feet, she then takes off at a run, enjoying the feel of the wind flowing through her tangled free hair.

"Oomphf" Sariah stumbles back as she collides into a hard form. Fear slithers through her veins as she stares at a pair of boots, remembering that Aadam lives on this land alone...fudge nugget, did the Cupid somehow manage to find a way in!



Slowly taking steps back, she warily raises her gaze to see who she ran into when shock overcomes her fear at what she sees. What she ran into, looks just like Aadam, yet with red eyes and pointy ears. “Aadam?” She whispers, not wanting to alarm the being if it’s not Aadam.

“Sortha,” It lisps through its razor-sharp teeth.

“Sort of?” Sariah repeats, feeling a little better. “Are you connected in some way to Aadam?”

“Yesth,” It responds.

“Whew! Okay, good to know. I’m Sariah, not sure if Aadam wouldn’t mention me to you or not, but just in case. This way you know I don’t mean any harm or anything, ya know.”

“I knowth who youth arth.”

“Alrighty then. Well, I think I’ll just head back to the cabin while you...uh” Sariah looks around at their surroundings, “get back to whatever it is you’re doing.” Without waiting for a response, she turns and races back to the cabin.

Slamming the cabin door shut behind her, she sees Puppy sitting on the bed with a smug expression on his face. “Alright, alright, I admit it. You were right to keep me from going out, but hey, bright side...I didn’t come across any traps.” Puppy rolls his eyes before kneading the bed, curling into a ball and closing his eyes for a little catnap.

“That looks like a great idea,” Sariah admits as she takes over her shoes at the end of the bed, scooching her body up towards the pillows, pulling the blankets over her as the warmth and purring from Puppy’s body lulls her to sleep.

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Aadam struggles to carry the twelve bags of groceries from Sariah’s list from the truck to the magical border. Once he reaches the border, he immediately sends out a command

through the link that connects from him to his clones to return, leaving clone two and three from merging back so they can assist with carrying the groceries to the cabin.

Without the added weight of all the bags, they quickly make their way to the cabin where Aadam's surprised to find Sariah fast asleep, Puppy blinking sleepily at him, as him and his clones enter quietly, quickly putting everything away before Aadam merges them all back into himself.

"Should I wake her to fix dinner, or let her get what might be some much needed rest?" Aadam whispers to Puppy, who just yawns and closes his eyes. "Guess that means I should let the two of you rest some more. In that case, I'll head outside and check on the other creatures."

Aadam quietly exits the cabin and heads over to the snake pit to check on the few snakes that have stuck around after healing. From there, he makes his way to the horse shed, pig pen, duck pond and turtle pond, lizard encampment and lock down where the animals kept from others are located.

He checks over all their bandages, healing status and tries to gauge their emotional states in order to see if those fully healed are ready to be returned to the land outside of his barrier. "I truly wish I could keep you all here to prevent any more injuries to you, but if I do that for one, I'll have to do it for all and eventually my land would be overcome with you creatures, leaving no place for me."

Heading back the cabin, he sits in the rocking chair on the porch, Kitten to one side, as Puppy makes his way out of the cabin through the doggie door to jump into Aadam's lap as he rocks back and forth.

Aadam starts to doze off, waking to the smell of something delicious wafting from the cabin. Sniffing deeply, his stomach growls in hunger. Rising to his feet, unceremoniously making Puppy drop from his lap, Aadam heads into the kitchen. "Whatcha got cooking Sariah? It sure smells delicious."

Aadam stops in his tracks as his heart lodges in his throat at the sight of Sariah in a T-Shirt that hits just above her

knees, bare legs and feet. She's slightly leaning over the stove as she tastes whatever's in one of the pots, causing the shirt to rise just a tad higher.

Placing the spoon on the counter, Sariah turns to face Aadam with a bright smile, twinkling eyes and drop dead gorgeous body. "You're awake." She states simply.

Clearing his throat, he rubs the back of his neck as the tips of his ears turn pink, "Uh, yes. I woke to the smell of whatever delicious food you're cooking up. It's been a long time since I've smelled something so good."

Sariah's smile widens even more, "Go wash up, dinner will be ready soon. I'll just need you to set out some plates and silverware when you get back. I'll handle the rest." She turns back to check on whatever's in the over before turning the burners down.

"Yes ma'am," Aadam whispers, throat tightening as tears threaten to fall. Thinking back over all the years he's been in existence, he can't ever recall when he's had a home cooked meal. Heading to the connecting washroom, he does as she requested, washing his hands thoroughly before grabbing plates from the cabinet and silverware from the drawer. He sets them at each end of the table.

Sariah walks over with one pot and places it on a pot holder set in the middle of the table. "Do you need some help?" Aadam offers.

"Nope, you just sit down and relax. There's only a few more items to grab...oh, unless you want to grab some cups and fix us something to drink. That would be quite helpful."

Aadam gladly stands up to get drinks for them, feeling uncomfortable just sitting down while she brings the food over.

"Thank you," she beams as she sets the last item on the table and he places a glass of water in front of her. "Do you say Grace or anything before eating?"

"No, my family isn't too big on that sort of stuff." He answers quietly, as if afraid it'll be a huge offense.

“Yea, mine as well. But that’s perfect, we can just skip all that and dig right in.”

Letting out a quiet sigh of relief Aadam grins at her, “Sounds good.”

They eat in silence throughout the meal, enjoying the food, solitude and surprisingly, one another’s company. Neither of them ever thought they could enjoy a moment like this, much less have a moment like this.

As they sit back, digesting the food, Aadam warily asks, “Do you feel up to telling me what’s up with you and the Cupid situation?” Seeing fear flicker in her eyes he quickly adds, “If it’s too soon I understand. Just forget I asked.”

A slight smile tilts her lips that don’t reach her eyes. “If I tell you, can you promise not to kick me out?”

Confusion furrows Aadam’s brows, “What does you running from Cupid have to do with me kicking you out or not, after I’ve already agreed to let you stay for a bit?”

“Because, if you’re like anyone else that has found out my secret, you’ll want me to leave as quickly as possible, and not want anything to do with me, ever again.”

“Well, you definitely have my curiosity piqued, but if you aren’t ready to tell me, because you fear me kicking you out...then I guess we can work on getting to know one another a bit better before you divulge that type of secret.”

Sariah lets out a huge sigh of relief, “I truly appreciate that, Aadam. Also, I’ll try and refrain from getting you to tell me what you are, until I’m ready to tell you as well. I feel that should be a fair enough trade.”

“Deal.”

With their stomachs full, the sky dark and no tv or books to keep them occupied, Aadam sits in a makeshift recliner he made, while Sariah climbs back in bed, both of them quickly dozing off.

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“Aah!” Sariah screams, waking Aadam who rushes into the house to see what would illicit such a loud and ear-piercing scream.

“What in the ever loving rainbow fart!” Aadam exclaims, spooked at the sight of one of his clones standing next to the bed, holding what appears to be an injured bunny.

At the sight of Aadam, Sariah scrambles off the bed and jumps into his arms, wrapping her arms around his neck and her legs tightly around his hips. Aadam’s hands automatically grab under her butt, holding her in place.

Digging her head into his shoulder she blindly points in the direction of the clone. “Who or what is that? Why does it look like you? I know I saw one yesterday when you were gone, but that one had sharp and pointy teeth, while this one doesn’t.” Sariah rambles.

“Sariah, it’s okay.” He takes a steadying breath. “Can you climb off of me and I’ll explain?”

Rearing her head back, Sariah seems almost shocked at the position she’s in. Quickly hopping out of his arms she quickly looks him over. “Are you okay? Do you feel sick, weak, nauseous, light headed, dizzy? Any type of unusual symptoms?”

“Um...no. I fee fine, other than having to explain a part of me a lot sooner than I expected...or rather, something that I had hoped to never have to explain.”

Sariah’s shoulders sag in relief. “Oh good. I’m so glad that you weren’t affected.”

“Affected? By what?” Aadam questions, curious, yet alarmed by her words.

“Well, great, this is fan-freaking-tastic. I guess I’m gonna have to own up to a bit about me as well that I had hoped to keep hidden.” Sariah slaps her lips, punishing them from allowing her to open her big mouth and blab. “You first, since it’s because of you I have to confess about me.”

“Okay, well, um, so, um.”

“Spit it out already, man!”

“Alright, alright. I have an ability that allows me to create clones of myself. The only catch, is that each clone created looks less and less human.”

“Ohhh!” Sariah exclaims wide-eyed. “So, that’s why this one appears a bit more human than the one from yesterday!” She giggles excitedly. “That is so awesome! I mean, probably not for some unsuspecting person to come across, but the fact that you can do it and that each clone has an additional change from the one before. I think that is fascinating.”

Adam’s mouth drops, unsure if he’s hearing correctly. He digs a finger into his ears to make sure there isn’t anything blocking them. “What?”

Sariah giggles, “I think that’s an awesome ability.”

Unsure of how to respond, “So, now that I’ve come clean, it’s your turn.”

Giggles quickly stopping, Sariah’s face deadpans as she starts, “Remember...you’re not allowed to kick me out.”

Adam waves a hand, waving off her worries.

“So, there was some sort of birth defect that affected me when I came of age. Um... because of it whenever someone of the opposite sex is around me for too long they could wind up dying.”

Adam blinks rapidly, “Say what now? You went way to fast.”

Sariah frowns, wrings her hands together as she repeats herself, “Because of the birth defect, whenever someone of the opposite sex is around me for too long, they could potentially wind up dying.”

Adam bursts out laughing, “Ok, so what’s that got to do with you worrying if I was affected when you jumped out my arms earlier?”

Sariah nibbles on her lower lip, “Well, when I have physical contact with a guy, it lessens the time of when that

guy is immune to the defect. This makes day three we've been together and now that I've had physical contact with you, I'd guesstimate that I'll have to leave in no more than three days in order to cause you harm."

"What kind of baloney are you spewing? Do you honestly expect me to believe that you have that kind of ability?" Aadam scoffs, never having heard of something like this before.

Tears fill Sariah's eyes at his mocking. Hurt, she runs out of the cabin and into the woods. Eyes blurred, she can barely make out where she's going, when she manages to reach the magical border and runs right through it, back into the human realm.

"Tsk, tsk, tsk. You didn't really believe you could put me off forever, did you?" Cupid's words cut through the darkness, quickly turning Sariah's hurt into fear as he appears from behind a huge tree.

"Cupid, what's the point in matching me with anyone when all that will happen is that they will die?" Sariah screams out.

"Everyone has someone they are meant to be with. How do you know that the person you are matched with will suffer the same fate as the guys from before?"

Unable to breath, Sariah gasps for air as memory over her high school crush comes to mind. He was so handsome and smart, all the girls wanted his attention and yet he only noticed Sariah. He asked her to Prom and it was the happiest night of her life...until the clock struck 10:34pm. The day and time of Sariah's birth...eighteen years later.

At the end of Prom, he took Sariah home and they kissed goodnight, his skin looking pale in the bright moonlight. After Prom weekend, Sariah waited for him at the entrance to their school, where he never showed. Worried, but not thinking too much of it, since he did appear pale when they left one another, it wasn't until a week later that she met up with some of his friends to ask them about him.

As she drew closer to them, their eyes widened in fear and they ran off. Tears filled her eyes as thoughts of him not liking the kiss, that he was just playing with her, etc. fills her mind.

A month later, her homeroom teacher announced that they had some bad news to report. Sariah's high school crush passed away the night before. He got sick the night of Prom and was in a coma for a while before passing.

Panicked, Sariah blindly runs out of class and heads home, needing to think over that night and what could have caused him to become so ill when they were both so active and joyful during Prom.

When Sariah arrived home, her parents were packing the house up in preparation to move. "Mom. Dad. What's going on?"

Tears trail down her mom's cheek as she stops to explain, "Sariah, my dear poor child. We had hoped it would never come to this, but now we know how futile wishing was."

"Mom, what do you mean?"

"We are moving dear, because of you. That young man died...because of you."

Sariah's voice is silent, even as she tries to get words out. Shock keeps her mute as her mother begins to tell the story of Sariah's birth.

"You were a surprise baby, since both your father and I were told we were sterile. So, when I became pregnant with you, we knew something magical must've happened. However, when you were born, there were some symbols lighting across your body. Obviously, your father and I had no idea what it was, all we knew is that shortly after your birth, they disappeared. Only your father and I could see them, the nurses and doctors never saw anything other than a perfect baby girl.

'Months later, we were visited by an ethereal looking woman who told us that we were blessed with you as our child, however, there has to be some negative outcome from



receiving such a gift. That negative outcome would come to fruition on your eighteenth birthday.

“The night of Prom, that same woman knocked on our door while you were out and she warned us that there was going to be a death, and that it would be because of the negative outcome from your birth. She explained that you will never be able to get close to a man or else you will cause them ill health, if nothing physical happens, or if there is physical interaction, they will more than likely perish soon after the contact happens.”

“Mom. Dad. You can’t seriously believe any of that, can you?!” I cry out.

“We didn’t...not until that young man passed away. That was when we knew that the woman spoke the truth. Now, in order to protect you, we are moving away from here and you will be going for your GED instead of graduating.”

“But, mom!”

“Don’t bother to try and reason with us, this is final!”

Ever since then, I’ve tried one other time to have a normal relationship, my second one ending with my boyfriend getting put on life support. I’ve vowed to never put another man through any of that going forward.

Returning to the present I see Cupid smiling down at me. “I see you’re thinking back over you few and minor relationships. Those were with humans though, do you truly believe with the blood running through your veins that a human could handle your birth defect?”

“Are you trying to say that a non-human can? So, all I need to do is get together with a non-human and I don’t have to worry about the possibility of killing them with just a kiss?” I scoff.

“No, my dear. Even a non-human could be killed by you with just a kiss...however, I can guarantee that there is one being in this world that can counteract against the defect.”

“Why should I believe you?! Why should I chance putting someone through the test? What if in the end, there

truly isn't anyone who can withstand the defect and that I could happily live a long lifetime with?"

"Do you want to find out who that person is?" Cupid grins mischievously, a dimple appearing in one of his cheeks.

Sariah's heart thumps a little as she contemplates what to do. She truly does want to find someone to love, care for and have a family with. But, is there truly someone out there who won't be affected by her?

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"Where did that darn woman run off too?" Aadam pants as he runs through the forest, trying to find Sariah. Stopping, he takes a moment to gather his thoughts, coming to a decision to use his clones to cover more ground, when he hears Kitten barking.

"Did you find her, girl?" He runs over to where Kitten stands. "Let's go get her." Kitten takes off running with Aadam closely on his heels.

Reaching the border, Aadam sees Sariah on the ground crying, while a Cupid stands above her with a mischievous smile. "Shh, Kitten. Let's not alert them to our presence."

Silently Kitten and Aadam cross the border, drawing closer to Cupid and Sariah.

"Do you?" Cupid asks.

Sariah looks up at Cupid and silently nods. "I really shouldn't know, but I can't help it anymore. Being here with Aadam these few days have shown me what it's like to live happily with someone. Even though we don't know each other well enough, or done much for one another, I appreciate and have enjoyed the time we spent together. I want to find that, and a more personal relationship with someone."

Aadam barely restrains himself from rushing over to her, pleading with her to not leave him, that he feels the same way.

Cupid's head tilts to the side before responding. "Are you sure? There is no turning back. If for some reason it's deemed that he can't withstand your birth defect, then there is no other for you. Only this person is the one who has a chance against it. Only his love can save the both of you. Are you willing to take the risk, little vixen?"

Vixen? Aadam's eyes widen. Aren't Vixen's foxes? Wait, is she some sort of fox? He takes a step back in surprise. A twig snaps underfoot causing Sariah and Cupid to look in his direction.

"Uh, hi." Aadam lamely waves hello.

A shocked look comes over Sariah's face, "What are you doing here? Wait, how much have you heard?" She adds, seeing a slightly shocked look on his face. "You heard the part about me being a Vixen, didn't you?"

"Uh, yea I did. Sorry." Aadam admits.

"It's fine. I might as well lay all my cards on the table. I'm part Vixen and part Siren. I was never supposed to be born and yet I was. This is what caused me to have that birth defect I was trying to warn you about."

"Wow, I never would've thought of that bit of mixture in a being."

"Care to tell Sariah about you now?" Cupid speaks up, eyes twinkling with delight.

"Oh, me? Why?"

"Only because she just opened up and told you about her. All's fair in love and war you know. Only once you know the truth about one another can you grow." Cupid states.

"Do you truly want to know?" Aadam asks Sariah.

"Yes, please. I truly am curious as to what you are since I've never seen an aura such as yours, and you seem to calm my fears when we're together." Sariah answers honestly.

"Ok, but please don't fear me once you find out. Others fear me without knowing me and even my siblings

don't acknowledge me. I honestly am not sure if I could take disgust coming from you."

"Why? Does my reaction matter that much to you?"

Feeling as though he needs to bare himself in front of her, to try and have her remain by her side, he decides to be completely honest with her. "It does. You're the first person who's treated me kindly and without prejudice. I've come to enjoy our time spent together and wish to get to know you more and see what could come from a possible relationship between us."

"After what you just heard, and about my birth defect, there really would be no possibility of a relationship between us," Sariah declares.

"Whether or not that is the case, I will let you decide after you find out who I am. I am Aadam Krampus. The second oldest Krampus son. My mother is 'Sandman' and so with both of them as my parents, everyone predetermines who and how I am supposed to be.

'All I want is to have a nice and quiet home, take care of the injured animals that come to the magical border and if I'm lucky enough, find a woman who will love and care for me as I will her to grow and raise a family with.

'With my parents being who they are, would you be willing to take a chance on being with me? Even if I was to die today, I would stake my life on a chance at being with you. I've somehow managed to fall for you. My heart is steering me in your direction even while knowing how crazy this is in such a short amount of time.

'Maybe this is love though, my type of love? Fast, quick and 100% heartfelt.'

Tears stream from Sariah's eyes as her heart aches, "Aadam, I so wish I could be with you, I truly do. Yet, I can't bear the thought of your death being caused by me. Your aura is too beautiful and your passion for saving these creatures is too bright to dim by my hands."

Wild clapping brings Aadam and Sariah's attention away from one another.

“Bravo! I must say that you too are a match made in, well, wherever your match is made, because it certainly isn't part of the norm.”

Aadam and Sariah are both confused as they look at Cupid.

“Seriously Aadam, did you think Sariah could just saunter through the magical barrier and practically right to your doorstep without some sort of intervention?”

‘Sariah, do you really think after all this time of me chasing you, I'd let you get away so easily unless there was an ulterior motive?’

“Ohhh!” Sariah and Aadam exclaim as realization hits them.

“We're each other's meant to be's!”

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Cupid leaves Sariah and Aadam shortly after they make their realization. Knowing that they are meant for one another and each other's secrets they happily make their way back to the cabin where they enjoy some one on one time.

Floating over the cabin, Cupid gives a little wink as he feels a tug from destiny, already at play in creating a loving family for the two. With best wishes for them both, Cupid flies off and onto his next assignment.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Marsha became an author back in 2017, finishing her first book that she had started about 10 years prior to publishing it. She's an avid reader and has always enjoyed creating stories for others to read.

She has 2 children, a cat (named Leo), a dog (named A.J) and a beta fish.

Reading gave her an escape from reality as she grew up, and her wish is that her stories may do the same for someone else.