

DEMONIC
DISCIPLES

A muscular man with short dark hair and a light beard is shown from the chest up. He has large, intricate tattoos on his arms and chest. A large, glowing red moon is positioned behind his head, creating a halo effect. The background is a dark, cloudy sky. The man's arms are crossed over his chest.

RADRIC

TAMRIN BANKS

Radric

DEMONIC DISCIPLES

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Cover by Karla Doyle

✿ Created with Vellum

For my readers! Hope you love the little Halloween short story!

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CHAPTER 1

All things between Heaven and Hell. That's what Earth falls into. The domain of humans and supernaturals seeking to live in peace, find their soulmates and live out their days in that sweet agony with them.

I snort in derision. My job tends to throw a spanner in the works for them.

My eyes dwell on the denizens of our kingdom, smirking at the writhing, groaning, screaming figures tortured by our minions. Otori and Ashmedai smile as they wield the whips that slam down on the backs of the guilty.

Steam and ash rise in the air all around me and I sigh, slightly bored. There's only so much of this that I can take before I'm ready to head out and find some new trouble to get into.

I stand up and stalk over to the gate, nodding my head at the gatekeeper. He smiles but it's not a good smile. It's more a grimace with teeth. Very sharp teeth.

I shift quickly into the form of a Taipan, slithering through the gates and up through the boiling, steaming ground all around me. Nothing around here will touch me. It's all home to me. Or Hell on Earth.

I come up and out in Magic, Wyoming, not really sure why I've come to this small area of the state. I'm usually called to bigger, more populated areas. Areas with the dregs of humanity hiding right in place sight amongst people just looking to live their lives.

As I slither up and through the scrub brush all around me in the mountains, I hear a scream from my right. A scream that makes my blood run hot then cold. There's something familiar and right about that voice.

Not the fear. I don't like that. I slither closer, my tongue reaching out to taste the scents in the air. Shifters. Two. One whose scent is almost entirely concealed by the copper of blood. A scent which makes me smile cruelly. Death is my friend, not my enemy.

This death however doesn't feel right. And the shifter will not be mine. I can feel the angel close by him. An angel that also protects something else. Something pure and delicate. Something mine.

A growling hiss rolls out of my belly and up through my chest as I swiftly morph, bones cracking and breaking cruelly. My body shifts and becomes my human form. I step forward, feeling all my senses dulled but still better than any human beings.

I can scent something other than the angel and it makes my blood run cold. This shifter is another thing entirely. A cloud of foul sulphur smell surrounds him and he's moving. I can see the heat from his body moving closer to the human female.

The angel Chastity sighs when he sees me coming, his eyes sad and cold. "What are you doing here, Asmodeus? This is not a place for you."

"Shows what you know," I hiss. A fiery warmth slowly builds and races from my belly up my spine and straight into my cock, lengthening it painfully.

And that's when I see her hiding behind the rocks, her pale face and tiny figure full of curves and valleys just begging for my hands, my mouth, my cock.

"Mate," I hiss. Chastity groans and rolls his eyes.

"No. You cannot have her. She is pure."

"She is mine." I don't care what he says. Don't care what anyone says. She will be mine. If I have to corrupt the innocent to get what I want, that is what I do.

And it's never had a better purpose than this. My mate, my future. The female who's meant to be my everything.

A snarl erupts into the cool, clear night air of the mountains. There's another scream and that's it for me. I leap forward and growl as I wrap my hands around the shifter barreling towards my mate.

"What do you think you're doing?" I snarl.

"Mine," he growls and snaps at me. Sighing, I slam his head into the ground, hoping to knock some sense into the asshole.

I can see the body of the wolf shifter. He's been completely mangled and there's a strange bite mark on his neck like I've never seen before. But I can scent the sulfur on him.

"You're not a shifter."

His long lips stretch into a sadistic grimace. "Yes, I am. But what are you, demon?"

A smirk twists my lips. "Demon? I suppose you could say that? Or you could call me a prince of Hell. Call me Radric. After all, we know that you'll be joining me in Hell. Sooner rather than later if you continue on the path that you're on."

I lean closer as he snaps at me, his lips twitching and drool dripping from his long, blood-soaked fangs. "And if you touch that female, I'll drag you to Hell right now."

He backs away and turns to look at her one more time before he races away, his body low and tight to the ground.

I want to chase him. Want to make him suffer for his arrogance in thinking that he can take the woman from me.

But my head turns towards her and my eyes gleam, the faint scent of cinnamon fire in the air where she stands. I slip up behind her, my eyes locked on her soft curves as I finally stand over her.

She's so tiny, she barely comes up to my chest. Her fiery red hair is a flaming halo of fire around her sweet, pale face. Little dots drift across her little nose and down her pale chest.

Her large breasts, too large for such a tiny frame draw my lust-filled gaze. Plump, full and round.

She's a goddess. My goddess.

She stills as if she senses something and I see her shiver, her body tense and her eyes shut. Then I move and she feels it, her eyes opening. As soon as I look into her eyes, I know she's too damn good for me. But I intend to have her anyway.

She will be my queen of the damned.

Her soft, sky-blue eyes, so blue and pure that they look like clear mountain skies lock on me and then they roll back in her head and she drops like a stone to the ground.

Or she would have if I hadn't been there to catch her. Now that I've found her though, I will always stand between her and any threat.

And if anyone touches her, there will be Hell to pay.

CHAPTER 2

Moaning, I slowly open my eyes, confused at how very warm I feel. It's like I'm lying on something hard and extra-warm. It sears my skin, not burning me, just branding me with its warmth.

Everything around me is dark and I can't see in front of my face for more than a couple of inches.

I sit up and look around, lifting a hand to cover the back of my head and wincing. "What happened?"

"You fainted."

I squeal as the dark, husky voice penetrates the black of the night. Whirling around, I flinch at the size of the man in front of me. My eyes go up and up and up. He's got to be over six and a half feet tall. He steps forward and all of a sudden it's like he's bathed in a rich red glow. I look around, confused where it came from.

But his eyes glow demon-red and my stomach clenches. "Wh-what are you?"

"I go by many names, angel." His mouth twists when he calls me by that name and I study him closely.

"Why does it sound like an insult when you call me that?"

"Not an insult exactly." He moves closer and I can see him more clearly. My brow wrinkles because for some reason I smell roses. It seems to be coming from him.

I sit up quickly and my eyes search all around me. "Where is he?"

“He who?” The man snarls, his eyes burning into me.

“The killer. The werewolf? At least I think it was a werewolf. It looked just like the one that got killed.”

“And then I saw the Sheriff and he talked to me. But then it showed back up and the Sheriff was chasing after it but he didn’t see it like I saw it. It just looked like a werewolf.” I stop, chuckling. “I never thought I’d say looked just like a werewolf. What a weird thing to say!” I shake my head and sigh. “I don’t think the Sheriff believed me when I said that it looked like whatever that thing was had a second body and it came out of the shifter body to kill the shifter and then it went back in.”

His head tilts to the side and he eyes me closely. “What did the other body look like?”

“Strange. Like it was a dust storm of some kind. A funnel and then it had claws and teeth inside it.”

He nods his dark head and his eyes go black. His body fades out and all I can see is a black cloud. “Like this?”

I point at him excitedly. “Yes, yes! Just like that!”

He nods again. “So it wasn’t a shifter. It was a demon possessing a shifter.”

“A demon?” I shake my head, completely confused. “Shifters and demons? Ugh. This is the worst vacation ever. I never should have left home.”

“No. You should definitely have left home.” His eyes flash with fire again and I feel that silky heat start to fire up in my belly and rush through my body like a wildfire again. My fingers and toes tingle. My clit pulses and I shiver, startled.

He moves closer and his dark eyes flash, the muscles of his body tightening and expanding. His skin looks like it’s pulsing. “Seriously?” I whisper. “What are you?”

“I am your mate. Radric. Prince of Demons.”

“You’re what that thing was?” My mouth drops open, appalled. I don’t want anything to do with demons. “Demons

are from Hell aren't they? Why would Hell want me? I haven't done anything wrong!"

He chuckles and his dark eyes fire up again, flames burning in their inky depths. "Hell wants everyone," he purrs. "But it's me that wants you. I'm your mate, angel."

"Mate? What's a mate? What does that mean?" Terror begins to barrel around in my belly like I'm on a rollercoaster ride that's out of control. It feels like I'm falling so fast that I can't even breathe. My breath pants in and out quickly and spots dance in front of my eyes.

"Whoa!" He sounds like his voice is coming from a tunnel and then everything goes black again.

The last thing I see is his dark eyes coming closer to me, laser-focused on me.

CHAPTER 3

Radric

I catch my little mate again, my lips quirking. I should be annoyed because this little thing can't seem to stay upright.

But it gives me the chance to hold all of those lush curves in my hands so I can't say I'm that upset.

It's a lot for a little human to hear. Lust stirs and my cock stiffens. I need to mate my little human but I also need to find the demon she's hiding from.

"What demon escaped and has taken over a shifter?" It's obvious that that's what this is but I haven't heard of any recent escapees so this must be one that escaped earlier and has managed to hide from me and my brothers.

Nothing can hide from us so how did this one manage it?

There's a shift in the air and I push out a forked tongue, hissing and sniffing the air.

"Put that thing away, Radric, and drop the human female. She has done nothing to earn her place in Hell."

I chuckle mirthlessly. "She has won me. That's how she has earned her place in Hell. She will be mine, Gabriel. Fate has decreed it. Even you know that you can't fight fate."

His sage head nods sadly. "But to take such a one seems sacrilegious. Innocence does not belong in your world."

"She will not be innocent long." His lips twist and he groans.

"Lust. You are an avaricious beast."

I lift my head and smile grimly into his sad blue eyes. “Thank you. That’s the nicest thing you’ve ever said to me.” I shift her in my arms and carry her away. “You no longer need to concern yourself with her. I will take care of her from now on. She will never want for anything.”

“Except for freedom and her eternal life.”

That brings my eyes up and there’s a sinking feeling in my stomach because I know he’s right.

But she is mine and even if it’s wrong, I don’t give a damn.

“She will be happy,” I growl.

“Tell yourself that, Radric. Keep telling yourself that.”

He fades away and I walk into the night, my soulless eyes searching for a shelter to hide her away in. If I need to fight something, I cannot leave her exposed while I do it.

Miles later and there is nothing. Magic, Wyoming is such a tiny place and I can’t take her into the town. I need something hidden.

Finally, I come across an abandoned cabin in the woods and sniff the air again. Nothing. No shifters. At least not for a long time.

I kick the door open and slip inside with my dainty burden, staring around. Dust coats every available surface and I cringe. I don’t want to even touch the things here so I close my eyes and whoosh out a warm breath that immediately blows the cobwebs and dust away. My mate deserves the best. Sure, Hell’s a little ashy but it’s still better than this place.

The bed in the corner should be thrown on a dumpster pyre so I settle her on the couch and twitch my fingers against the fabric, feeling bones and mice burn away at my slightest touch. They squeak and try to escape in terror but I just smile and my eyes close, feeling their pain and torment.

Dumb animals. They can’t possibly escape me. Nothing can.

Especially not my innocent mate.

CHAPTER 4

Artemis

I wake again and this time I'm lying against something incredibly warm and hard. When I open my eyes, my mouth drops open in shock. I'm lying against a hard, bare male chest that's decorated with a black tribal tattoo on one side of his muscular chest. He's sleeping lightly, his dark eyes closed and I can't stop staring at him. Desire curls through my veins and rises inside me until I'm fairly thrumming with it. I need him. Need him badly. More than I've ever needed any other man.

I've never been with a man. Mainly because I've never wanted one. I've always felt like there was something wrong with me and believe me, I had men that told me there was something wrong with me because I didn't want them.

I snort. Every damn man out there just expects a woman to drop to her knees or open her legs wide if he feels the urge. Give me a break. I want to want someone, to actually feel something for someone before I scratch that itch.

Now I'm acting like I've got Poison Ivy or something. The itch is insane and I'm barely holding back from rubbing myself all over him like a damn cat in heat.

There's a clatter at the door and my brow lifts when the sleeping devil's dark eyes fly open and he shoots up, pushing me behind him in one fluid movement.

Shaking my head, I sigh. "I doubt if it's your monster. It's probably the Sheriff."

But my words don't seem to matter to him. His full lower lip is curled and his big fists are clenched so tightly that I can

see how white they are. I can see the veins throbbing in them.

He ignores me and there's a constant low rumble coming out of his chest. A rumble which changes to a hiss as he suddenly seems to shimmer in front of me in a fiery red haze.

A haze that finally resolves itself into the sleek, frightening shape of a Taipan. The serpent flicks its tongue out and I jump behind the couch, terrified, but covering my mouth so that he doesn't become agitated.

The triangular head turns towards me and my initial fear returns twofold.

"I don't know what's going on, Radric, but I need to tell you that I'm terrified of snakes. I mean, absolutely petrified," I whisper. "So I'd really appreciate it if you could change back right this second before I lose my mind and scream this place down."

The triangular head weaves back and forth in a hypnotic dance and then my nose twitches when I smell roses again.

My favorite flower is the rose. Mainly because they were my mother's favorite. In particular Sterling roses. I still miss her and wish she hadn't been taken when I was so young.

But I can't see any roses around here. Just a huge-ass snake that's eyeing me like his next meal and that's not making my nerves settle at all.

He slithers closer and I stiffen, my eyes wide, my muscles so tight that it feels like my bones could crack. The closer he comes the harder it is to breathe. I shudder, keeping my eyes open as his huge, sleek body comes so close that I can see each one of his golden-brown scales. I try to watch as the serpent circles me, shivering and whimpering as it slithers over my feet and wraps around my lower body, his body tightening around me.

"Oh...oh my God!" I whimper, trying to keep from passing out. So far that seems like all I've done lately. Since I found out that shifters exist.

It's been a rough couple of hours really. I could really use a break.

But now the serpent is slinking up my body and the feel of his coiled muscles moving around me makes my skin break out in hives, my breath shallow and rapid. His huge, triangular head pops up in front of my face and I almost lose my mind. I can't breathe. Can't think. I just want to get the hell out of here. Unfortunately I've now got a snake wrapped around me and staring me right in the eyes.

There's another knock at the door and I hear a deep, commanding voice hollering, "Hey, this is Sheriff Lobo Canton from Magic. Who's in there? This place is supposed to be deserted so I'm gonna need you to open the door."

The snake's head whips around as soon as he hears the voice and he hisses, opening his mouth wide so that I can see his fangs glistening in the faint light.

"You need to come back, Radric. I need to answer that door before it gets busted down and I don't want to have to explain a huge snake to the Sheriff."

He eyes me and then he slides down my body while I attempt to breathe at all. He backs away and then I see that red shimmer again and he's standing in front of me, smirking, as his dark head swings towards the door.

"We can't keep the big, bad sheriff waiting can we?" And he stalks over to the door and swings it open, one big hand holding onto the doorjamb.

A large, dark man stands outside, his head slightly bowed to keep from hitting the doorway. When the light hits him, his head comes up and his golden-brown gaze narrows on the man standing in front of me.

"Miss...I'm surprised to see you out here. Seems to me like you said you were on your way home after you made your report."

Radric smirks and leans in to me, pulling me up against him so tight that I can't get away. The Sheriff lifts a dark brow and eyes us both cynically.

"You know, shifters don't usually care about nudity but I'm gonna say that I'd really appreciate it if you put some

clothes on.”

My cheeks flush and Radric grins, wide and wicked. His fingers caress my shoulder lightly, teasingly. “I kinda like the way I’m dressed right now. And she must like it too. I don’t hear her complaining.

I know my face must be fire-engine red at this point and I huff out an exasperated breath.

“How bout we all stop measuring our dicks, you put some clothes on, Radric and you tell us what you’re looking for here, Sheriff. Come on in.”

He steps through the doorway, wary and controlled.

“I’m looking for your weird guy. I’ve been running around through here and actually ran across a strange trail pretty close to here. It wasn’t you two. I could clearly see yours but this one kinda seemed like it was tailing you.”

Radric hisses and I see that predatory, malevolent look in his dark eyes and I know he’s planning what he’s going to do with this guy if he gets his hands on him.

I sincerely hope that he never gets his hands on them and if he does, I really hope that I’m not around to hear it. He looks like he could easily tear someone limb from limb.

I don’t want to see that even if I understand the reasoning. Some things are just meant to be a mystery.

Especially if I ever want to be able to sleep at night again.

CHAPTER 5

I eye the big Sheriff suspiciously. He's obviously a shifter. It's also quite obvious that he's had dealings with my kind and he doesn't like us.

While Artemis is out of the room getting a drink for all of us from the meager possessions that I managed to scrounge up and the Sheriff gave us, I nod at her.

"She knows what I am so you can stop looking at me like I'm fixing to drag her down to hell with me."

"Aren't you?" he asked coldly.

"Yeah. But not against her will. She's my mate."

His brown eyes widen. "Does she know that too?"

"She does."

He chuckles. "I don't envy you because there's a lot to be said for being honest but telling your girl that you're a demon and she's your mate has to be a challenge."

I growl. "No worse than telling her that she's mated to a mangy wolf."

A look of hellish glee lights up his eyes. "As opposed to a demon from Hell? Yeah, I think I've got the better line, man."

His face sharpens. "By the way, the people around here aren't necessarily friendly to demons and denizens of Hell. We've had some issues with one of our citizens. She's been up against some characters from your home."

"Everything that goes on in my house is not part of my life. I don't know it all and believe me, I'm not interested in

her. I'm not interested in anything but my mate and this thing that might be tracking her. Because if it is...I'm gonna drag it to Hell myself. You don't fuck with what's mine unless you want to pay the price."

"Steep price."

"Yes, it is. And I have no problem exacting it." I smirk evilly. "It's my thing."

Artemis walks back in the room and I snarl under my breath when the Sheriff eyes her appreciatively. I don't like it. And it's plain to me that he's not mated.

"Eyes on me, Sheriff. Not my mate."

He gives me a playful smirk. "Can't blame a guy for looking."

"Actually I can. And if it was your mate, you would be plenty pissed too."

"You're probably right." He turns away from my mate and I can finally breathe right again.

Artemis is eyeing me like I'm still a serpent. I know she was terrified. I could smell her fear and hear her heartbeat pounding out of control in her luscious chest. I can still hear her even though it's more under control.

I go sit down in a chair and wave my hand at my little mate, waiting to see what she does. She hesitates and eyes me, unsure, hesitant. But I can feel her sidling a little closer.

"Come to me, little one." She stops and her dazzling eyes slide to the Sheriff, curious.

But then she steps so close that my fingers touch hers and she stiffens. Then her body settles into mine and she comes up and steps behind me, her hand in mine.

My mind and heart settle knowing that she's behind me. She's protected by me and anyone would have to go through me to get to her.

I turn to the Sheriff and nod at him. He sits in front of me and turns to her. "Can you tell me, did you see anything else

when you saw that thing kill the shifter? Was it a shifter?

“No, it’s not a shifter. I really don’t know what to call it.”

“It’s a demon. A rogue one, I believe.”

“So not like you, huh?”

My lips twist. “I’m a rogue, yes. And I will certainly kill someone if need be. But not an innocent. I kill for good reasons.”

The Sheriff nods. “I’m sure. But just to point out that if you kill someone, I’ll have to come after you.”

I snort. “Yeah. I’m not worried, Sheriff.”

“Call me Lobo.”

“A mangy wolf named Lobo. Good choice,” I chuckle and he shoots me a laugh but it seems like it’s all teeth and I know he’s dangerous. Maybe even more than I thought.

“You’ve got quite the idea of wolf shifters. But keep in mind that I’m the law around here. Not just a *mangy wolf*.”

I can almost feel the air quotes as he talks and I smile but it doesn’t reach my eyes.

“What’s your name, by the way?”

Laughing, I nod my head. “I go by many names. Most of them aren’t known to you or your kind. Only to the denizens of my world that fear me. But you can call me Asmodeus or Radric.”

His eyes narrow. “Asmodeus. A prince of darkness that deals in lust in all its forms.”

I feel Artemis jump and her eyes slew towards me.

“Yes. I’ve felt yours a time or two, Lobo. For your little waitress.”

He sits up straight, his shoulders tense and angry. “Don’t even talk about her. Don’t say her name. She has nothing to do with you, demon.”

Pursing my lips, I jerk my head thoughtfully. “True. She’s too naive and innocent for my tastes.”

Now it's his turn to shoot me a cynical look. "Unlike your little mate there, right?"

Artemis is tugging and pulling at her arm and I hear her hiss out a startled, angry breath as I refuse to let her go.

"Oh, she's innocent. Don't get me wrong."

"That is enough," Artemis speaks through her teeth, so angry that I can almost feel it rolling off of her in waves. "I don't want you talking about me like I'm not in the room. I'm not some piece of fluff that you can just pick up willy-nilly. I'm a human being with sentient thoughts and feelings."

"Of course you are, my love."

"Don't call me that," she hisses angrily. "And let go of me. I think I've heard enough. Lust? That's your stock in trade? That's what you deal in? Is that why...?"

She doesn't finish the sentence but my heart rate quickens anyway. I know what she was going to say.

"No. You're not feeling this way because of some sick trick that I'm playing on you. You want me because you belong to me. No other reason than that."

Lobo huffs out a laugh and stands up tall. "And with that, I think I'll leave you two to talk. Good luck with that, Radric." He nods towards the red-faced and angry woman still jerking at her arm like she's going to get away from me.

Not gonna happen but it's cute that she thinks it will.

The devil looks after his own and so do I.

CHAPTER 6

As soon as Lobo walks out the door, I'm jerking away again but his hold on my arm tightens until I hiss out a breath, knowing I'm going to have a bruise.

"You're not getting away from me, goddess, so you might as well stop before you hurt yourself. I can hear the thoughts running through your pretty little head but you are wrong. Our feelings are not a trick of mine. Yes, I mess with humans. I can control their emotions, twist their feelings to make them do things they might not normally do. A one-night stand with a biker for a bored housewife looking for an out in her marriage. A mistress for a sitting congressman that totally screws his once-happy home up. And don't think I don't get some joy out of it. But the people that I mess with are already teetering on the edge of screwing their own lives up. They are not white knights out there working for a cause and protectors helping the downtrodden. They are assholes that are only looking to help themselves. And I help them."

"I cannot make my mate feel anything other than what she feels. You are and will always be immune to my trickery because you are my mate."

"Oh happy day. I should believe you, why?" I say sarcastically, trying to keep my guard up. My skin burns where her's touching me and I want nothing more than to have him burn me in other places. Private, secret places that are heating up, softening, yearning for his touch.

"There are a lot of things that some people might say to you about me but remember this. A mate is a special thing." He gives me whiplash changing the subject.

“We must mate in the next twenty-four hours. The blood moon is for the next day or so and I need my mate.”

His ebony eyes are sparkling with lust, dark with desire. His tongue slicks over his full lips and taunts me, teases me with temptation.

That’s not hard when he looks like that but I still can’t decide if this is real.

Are my feelings my own or are they twisted by his powers?

“They’re your own. I’ve already told you that you alone can control your desires and lust. You alone control our destiny.” His smirk turns speculative and naughty and my breath catches in my throat.

“That doesn’t mean that I won’t do my best to change your mind if you choose otherwise. I will do every damn thing to get you, to win you over, claim you for my own. Tonight. But even I, as a powerful prince of darkness can only do so much.”

Chuckling, I pace across the room back and forth. “You are definitely not humble. Prince of darkness indeed,” I huff.

He stalks across the room and blocks my path, stopping me in my tracks. “You don’t think that I am powerful, mate? I can care for you more than any other being in this world. Even if that demon shows up to touch you, he cannot harm a hair on your head if you are mated to me.”

“What was the Sheriff talking about with demons around here?”

He gets a haughty, annoyed look on his gorgeous, dark face. “Until we are mated, I don’t want to talk about another male. Hear his name or anything else about him from your lips.”

My eyes fly to his and the darkness in his deep ebony eyes is shocking. “You look insane right now.”

He stalks towards me, his body pushing into my space, leaning his head down to run his nose along my neck. “You smell delicious, mate.”

“Ummm,” My voice quivers and I have the naughties urge to climb his big body like a tree. I don’t understand these feelings. I’ve never had these kinds of feelings before and he’s the demon that impacts lust. Isn’t it odd that all of a sudden my previously quiet urges are raging out of control and taking over, scrambling all of my defenses and making me want this man, this demon, so much that I’m practically willing to throw myself at him, begging him to touch me.

His hand snakes down to cover my hip and I lean into him, my senses swirling with desire. I breathe in deep and his scent washes over me, a powerful cinnamon scent overlaid with a lush floral rose and a slight scent of sulfur. I’ve never smelled anything like it and it intoxicates my senses so much that I can’t think straight.

His head dips down until he’s whispering in my ear. “Let me claim you, mate. Let me love you like you should always have been loved. Like the beautiful, sensuous, sexy woman that you are.”

No man has ever said anything like that to me either. He’s pushing all my buttons to make me want him so much that I give in.

His lips trace my throat and I move it aside, letting him run his sharp teeth along my throat. The resulting ache has me desperate for any kind of release. There’s a deep, throbbing, aching in my belly.

“Artemis. A fitting name for a goddess of your stature. A goddess that deserves a prince who wants her so much that he’s willing to drop to his knees and please her.”

My stomach flips and I can picture him, his lean, strong, muscular figure pressed up against my front, his lips buried in my pussy, his mouth, teeth and tongue devouring my body like it’s his own favorite food. His own personal playground. His hands, long and strong, holding my thighs open so that he can lavish me with all of his body.

“I-I don’t know what to think.”

“Think that you’re willing to be mine and I will give you the world, my queen.”

“The underworld,” she sighs.

“Yes. But you’re not a demon. It’s not like you will never be able to walk out and see the world. You’ll just see it as someone who has a place in another world. With me. Your mate.”

His body presses against my center and I can feel his long, thick length rammed right into my core, right where I need it. I close my eyes and fight to gain control over my emotions, the desire and lust swirling in me like a fucking tornado of need.

But it’s not enough. It will never be enough until I’m being controlled by him, needed and taken by him.

“I want you too,” I whisper, shocked at the words coming out of my mouth but unable to stop them.

“Are you sure, my dove. If you become my bride there is no going back. There is no divorce from a demon. And if I claim you, you might as well realize that we might as well be married. I don’t need the ceremony but if you do, I will marry you. Wherever and whenever you want.” A slight smile curls his lips. “Although I’m partial to Las Vegas for a quickie wedding.” He licks his full lips. “It’s always quite the melting pot of sins and I find it quite invigorating.”

I find this whole conversation quite invigorating. “I do want you. Please.”

He growls under his breath and tugs me up against his hard body, lifting me up until my toes dance off the ground and I then wrap my legs around his slim waist.

“I am going to make you scream my name, little princess. You will lose your voice begging me, screaming for me to take you.”

“Which name should I scream?” I laugh and his dark eyes sparkle with wicked intent.

“Any of them. All of them.”

And then his lips claim mine. No slow build-up here. His lips take mine and own me. He tastes like cinnamon fire and man and I feel the slow burn that had been building inside me take root and shoot up into a massive conflagration that threatens to consume us both in its flames.

His tongue slips along my lips, biting and nibbling until I taste blood on my tongue. But it doesn't even slow him down and I don't stop him. His large hand slips down my side until he wraps it around one of my breasts, his fingers plucking at my turgid peak. I moan and my hips move forward and back, slowly building intensity and then I'm flying away, my body flung into space, throbbing with my release as he groans and tips his head back, roaring out his satisfaction.

“You will be mine, little goddess. For all time.”

CHAPTER 7

I bury my nose in her flame-red hair, reminiscent of the halls of my home, as she comes apart in my arms. I can smell her ardor on the air and it drives me crazy. She smells like pure cinnamon and fire to me. I can't get enough of it. My cock is rock-hard and seeping my seed as I rip my clothes off and then shred hers. I don't give a fuck about anything but getting inside her.

I line my thick girth up with her tiny body and begin to push the head of my cock inside her, feeling her slick, satiny heat close around me. If ever I believed in Heaven, it would be just like this.

"Baby, you feel so good it should be a crime. It should be one of the ten deadly sins."

She moans and writhes in my arms and her body slams into mine over and over again as she pushes to try and move my thickness deeper inside her. "I need you now. Don't stop," she hisses, her face flushed, her pretty pink mouth swollen from our kisses, a tiny drop of blood in the middle of her lower lip's fullness drawing my eye. I lick my lips and lean forward, dragging my mouth over hers and sucking in that jewel-like drop of her blood. I can feel her life in that little drop of blood. Can feel her energy, her...just her.

I grind into her slick body and feel her inner walls flutter wildly. "I love how you feel, little one. If I actually believed in Heaven, I'd say that it's in this sweet, sweet pussy."

She moans and her hips snap back and forth against me as I look around and finally spot a bed with bedraggled, dusty

sheets over to the side, hidden by a pile of boxes and other debris. I stumble over to it and then fall into it, her body under mine, pinned under me in the most delicious accidental delight.

“Oof!” she squeals, her legs strangling my hips and waist as she moans, her eyes rolling back in her head.

I roll over and pull her up on all fours, her body a playground for me as I run my claws over her perfectly lush curves.

I tug her head back by her hair and grind into her. “I know what you need, goddess, and as your lord and master, I claim you as my own forever.”

I drive into her hard, knocking the breath out of both of us as she falls face forward, almost landing on the other side of the dusty hell of a bed.

I slam into her again and again and she finds her voice, screaming wildly, her body quivering like jelly.

“That’s right. You know who owns you, little goddess. You belong to me.”

“Fuck yeah!” she pants and her hips twist into my hips. I lift my hand and bring it down on her rounded white ass once, twice, spanking her until her skin is a lovely mottled pink with my handprints. Her moans and the way her round ass and long limbs writhe and turn, begging for my touch, tempting me to mark her even more.

I close my lips on the back of her neck, suckling hard until she has a large welt right there, a searing mark that will never fade. My claws dig into her hips and I drive into her until she’s falling on her face because she can’t stay upright anymore.

“Yes, yes, yes!” Her husky voice is tight and breathless and then she completely loses control, her loud shriek bouncing off the walls of the little cabin and echoing in my head and my heart.

I growl loud and long and then release my own flood into her soft, swollen depths, planting my seed in her womanly womb.

I fall to the side and then drag her slight body over top of me, smiling when she winces as she stretches out. “Now, you belong to me, woman. I claim my princess of darkness in the name of all Hell.”

She huffs. “You sound like an overdramatic teenager.”

I pout. “You really don’t seem to have any respect for my powers.”

“I do. Believe me. You terrify me.”

I growl when she giggles and pinches me. “I swear. Most of my brothers have gotten mates that at least match their ruthless natures. I got a sunny little goddess. I cannot decide if I’m happy or sad.”

“Be careful or that will be the last time you get to fuck me.”

My eyes sparkle and I roll her over, smirking at her. “We’ll see about that.”

It’s hours later when she finally breathlessly pleads for sleep. I close my eyes and tug her close so I can bury my nose in her soft hair.

She smells like the most delicious candy to me. Soft, sweet and intoxicating.

Mine. She smells like mine and that’s all I really need to know.

CHAPTER 8

The door slams open and I jump up, screaming and throwing a bra, which is the first thing my hand touched, at the door.

Lobo huffs out a chuckle. “Yeah, that should work.” But he quickly sobers.

“You need to move. He’s on the way here.”

“How do you know?” Radric yawns.

“I saw him with my own two eyes. He’s heading this way and there’s nothing else out here for him.”

Nodding, Radric stands up and stretches, his long muscles lengthening even as my mouth waters. His cock is huge and right there.

He grins at me. “Not now, little one. We’ve got places to be right now.”

He grabs a few things he must think he’ll need and then Lobo throws some clothes at us. “I figured he’d get you and of course, being the melodramatic guy he is, he didn’t happen to think about you needing clothes or how pissed he’d get if you didn’t have them.” He rolls his eyes and then I grab the clothes and rush out of the room, wrapped up in a large sheet with moth holes in it.

By the time I get back, Radric is dressed in a dark sweater and dark jeans. He’s standing next to Lobo and they’re watching something outside. He turns to me and smiles slightly.

“You’re beautiful, my goddess.”

Lobo nods at me but barely looks at me. “I think we’re too late. This might be where we have to make our stand.”

Radric’s arrogant brow lifts. “I can do whatever I want. I don’t believe that I even have to try that hard. I can take him down any time I want to.”

“Well, you might want to think about it now. Because it looks like he’s coming for your mate.”

There’s another shifter outside, a big, burly man with the light stench of bear shifter. But his eyes are dead and his body moves jerkily, like a marionette with its strings being pulled by a puppet master. I can also see that strange mark on his neck.

“He’s drained them. That’s what that is.”

Lobo nods his dark head. “I didn’t know for sure.”

“Neither was I because as far as I know, no demon has used that for a long time. We don’t take bodies for our own uses. We take souls. Bodies are useless husks.”

“Apparently this guy doesn’t think so,” Lobo smirks.

Lobo smirks. “That useless husk over there is wearing your marks all over her.”

Radric gets a haughty look on his patrician face. “Don’t mention my mate’s body parts, human.”

Lobo snorts. “Don’t call me human. I’m a shifter.”

“You’re mortal. I am not.”

“Wait! You’re immortal? What does that mean for me?”

“Actually, since my mate is human, I am no longer immortal. But I will live quite a long time and so will you.”

My eyes widen. “I am immortal?”

He shakes his head. “No. Both of us will die. But we will love so much longer than these shifters that we will barely remember them when they die.” He smirks dryly. “Unless they join us in Hell.”

Lobo grunts under his breath as he stares out the window. “You’ll forgive me if I’m not in a rush to jump into Hell even

if I do like you.”

“I’m disappointed.” He chuckles long and deep.

Bang! Both men turn to stare at the back of the house. But we can still clearly see the demon shifter in the front.

“What the hell’s going on? Does he have a partner we don’t know about?”

Lobo’s eyes scrunch up and he glares out the window. “I don’t think so. But never say never, I always say.”

“I’m going to check out the back,” Radric says and I feel a quiver of unease.

“I don’t think that’s a good idea.”

“I’ll be fine.” He kisses my cheek and grunts. “Stay here and don’t you dare do anything dangerous.”

I ignore him and Lobo just grunts. “I’ll keep an eye on here. You go do your prince of darkness thing and see if we need to take out more than one bad guy.”

As soon as Radric leaves, I can feel a panicky feeling welling up inside me. “This isn’t a good idea. I-I need him to come back.”

Lobo doesn’t even bother looking up. I know he thinks I’m a hysterical female but there’s something wrong.

Before I can scream at him, beg him to get Radric right now, there’s a faint glow in the corner of the room and a chill washes over me, smothering me in fear.

There’s a darkness that’s slithering around the room silently but I can hear it hissing and humming in my head. “Lobo!” I whisper it so softly that I’m not even sure he heard me. But he stops and turns and his cold eyes widen before they narrow into pinpoints of danger.

“Demon. Get yourself gone. We’ve got nothing here for you.”

It whispers even more and I see a faint grin that’s transparent, frightening.

“Not before I take his new toy,” the voice hisses, malevolence creeping into the room like an icy shroud. I shiver and back away.

“No. You’re not taking me anywhere.”

“You get no choice, female. I have more power than you. I can take you without even trying.”

I can feel a pressure in my throat and then it feels like the slim column of my neck is being crushed, punished. I grab it futilely and try to speak but there’s nothing.

My eyes shoot to Lobo and I hold out a hand, begging, pleading silently even as the air in my lungs coalesces and disappears. I can’t breathe and my fingers claw at my throat and chest desperately. Like I can rip my way to my own breath. I can feel my skin tearing, blood on it as the shadow creeps closer and I see it licking its lips hungrily.

“I can smell your fear, human. You know that you can’t win against me.”

My vision begins to tunnel in and stars burst behind my eyelids as I sink to my knees. Sound becomes washed in a sea of muddle until I can barely tell that there’s any sound at all. Just pain and the mind-numbing terror of sinking into an abyss of death.

CHAPTER 9

I can't see anything anymore. I thought I saw a shadow earlier but now that I've crept around to the front I can't even see the shifter zombie that's carrying the demon.

I creep around the edge of the forest around us, keeping myself hidden so that I can hopefully sneak up on whatever's out here.

I have an icy chill that keeps creeping over me, beating at me and telling me that I've made a mistake and that feeling is getting stronger until I feel a fear like nothing I've ever known takes over me and I turn to run back to the cabin.

Even as I'm turning, I feel my insides turn to ice and I can't breathe. It feels like I'm being smothered.

I trip and almost go down and then reach out to run my hand along the ground, feeling a soft, squishy thing under my hand and scent the smell of death and blood.

"Fuck!" I roar and leap to my feet, practically levitating off the ground as I race back to the cabin.

I slam back inside and find my mate on her knees, her gorgeous, sky-blue eyes wide with pain and fear and a dimming of all that is her.

"No fucking piece of shit demon can kill my goddess, you stain."

The shadow grins and I see his hand tighten on her throat. Her eyes roll back in her head and I shift into my snake, slithering closer. I can see that she's terrified and it's not just of him now.

But I have no choice. I must save her. Even if it terrifies her.

There's a bruise on her throat spreading out until her chest is dark blue and mottled and I know that he's having to work hard because she's stronger since we mated.

But she's still so fragile that it's hard for her to fight him.

But that's what she's got me for.

I can see that Lobo is frozen and can't move and it's not me doing it. It's the demon.

But I slither closer, watching him shift away from me. One bite and this motherfucker is toast.

He knows it too. I can taste his fear. My tongue darts out and scents his fear on the air.

"Let go," I growl with my tongue coming out.

"No. I'll let go when both of you are dead."

But I grin. I slither closer and watch him back away. One step back and three slithered feet left.

We do this dance until I see my mate slipping to the ground and then I grasp his body and grin evilly.

"Let's see how you do against another, stronger demon."

I grasp his body, such as it is, and drag him down, down, down, until we're staring up at the floor and I watch Lobo helping my mate.

I glare at him. "You made me leave my mate. I should kill you. But don't worry, I'll let you live. I'm sure my father would love to meet the demon who tried to kill his daughter in law."

He screams and writhes but I refuse to let him go until I stand in front of my father.

"Can you take him? I need to return and check on my mate."

"Of course, my son. Take care of her."

I nod my head and leap to my feet, quickly tunneling my way back up to the surface.

She's lying on the floor and my heart skips a beat, it feels like I can't breathe.

I sit next to her and pull her limp body into my lap, feeling my emotions rearing up and pushing out of me.

"Goddess, come on. Please wake up."

She whimpers but her eyes stay closed. I lift my hand and hold it on the huge bruises on her throat. I close my eyes and feel my hands warm. Feel the pain and hurt in her as I slowly, surely push it away and bring her home to me.

Finally, her eyes flutter open and I smile. "There's my goddess."

"Radric? What happened?"

"It doesn't matter. All that matters is that I've got you and I'm never letting you go." I lean down and my lips seal to hers lightly, lovingly.

Her cool lips warm under mine and she moans, her hands wrapping around my neck.

A throat clears and Lobo stands awkwardly watching us. "I'm gonna go. I think you two have some things to talk about."

I stand and hold her in my arms as I hold my hand out to him. "You need me for anything...call me, Lobo. I can help you."

He nods and leaves and I'm finally alone with her. I push the soft hair out of her eyes and smile. "You're not getting away from me again, goddess. You're all mine."

She smiles and whispers hoarsely, "thank goodness. I hope that we can both find what we need with each other."

"Nothing would make me happier, mate. I'm going to spend my whole life seeing to your needs."

She smiles slightly. "I think that sounds about damn perfect." Her smile dims. "I love you, Radric."

“I love you more, my goddess.”

I found my reason for being. My mate, the love of my life and soon we shall have a new member of the family. But I’m not telling her yet.

Tonight is just for us. For our love, our rejoicing in the victory over the demon and the way forward to our wonderful, strange new life.

We have forever and I intend to take advantage of every second of it...with her. My fiery goddess.

Epilogue: Artemis

The world is a hellish glow of red and smoke. I cannot say that I've gotten used to the weird, exotic land that I'm now a part of. It's literally Hell.

We pop in and out all the time because my baby is not about to be born in this land. Sure, our little prince will be straddling the line between two lands but that doesn't mean I intend to have a baby without some kind of painkiller. Hell to the no! I want drugs!

Radric saunters over, his smile devilishly wicked and I feel my clit throbbing. He took me this morning hard and deep. But I want more. I always want more. This damn pregnancy has made me want him all the time. I have never been so demanding. And he's fucking happy as hell.

"You look like you're about to jump me again, little goddess." The smug smirk on his face makes me want to slap the hell out of him.

"I don't want to talk about it," I mutter under my breath. I can see his father and mother in the next ring of punishment and I wince as I watch them eagerly cheer on the demons participating in the torture of the various shifters and humans. This circle is particularly bad and I can see the rogue demon in that circle.

I nod at him. "Do you think your father will ever forgive him for forsaking this place to go to Magic and do what he did? He exposed even more of Hell's machinations."

"I don't think so. And since there is no death here, there will never be any peace for him."

I eye him with a raised brow. “You’ll forgive me if I hope that Magic’s denizens defeat your father’s forces.”

He smiles and leans closer, whispering in my ear. “I like that Sheriff. Even if he did look at my wife.”

I scoff. “He did not. You imagined the whole entire thing because you’re a jealous idiot.”

“I don’t think you should call a prince of hell that.”

Rolling my eyes, I slap his ass lightly. “If you call yourself that one more time, I can’t be held responsible for my actions. I mean, seriously. There has to be something else to call yourself.”

“What? Like Mr. Radric? I don’t think so.” His nose curls up and he glares around at the other demons and his family members. “I am what I am, goddess.”

“What you are is mine?”

“Do you want to go back above again?”

Eagerly, I nod. “Yes, I do.”

His eyes sparkle. “Vegas, baby?”

Snorting, I growl. “Fine. But I want to go to a few shows this time. And some buffets. I don’t want to stand around and just watch the idiots gambling all their savings away and then doing something stupid and reckless with your help!”

“But that’s the best part!” he protests.

“We can find something better to do,” I purr and slither up against him, feeling his heat envelop me like a raging fire.

“I can do that any time,” he pouts.

“Not with that attitude,” I smile. “Fine. A couple of hours. And then we’re doing what I want to do this time.”

“Deal. I’m gonna rock your world, goddess.”

He’s already done that over and over again. I never thought I’d find a man and I couldn’t have been more right. Instead I found myself a demon who can’t help but talk about himself in

the third person but he also make love to me like...well, a demon.

He's way more than I thought I'd find. I rub my belly and smile. Soon, I'll be delivering our own little demon into this strange and tortured world.

Radric hugs me to him, his claws digging lightly into my side as he holds me close and kisses me deliciously slowly, making me shiver with lust.

Making me damn glad that I found my demon of desire and gave in to the fires that only he can raise.



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About the Author

I'm a mother of three who works for a school district as a cafeteria aide but I've also had a lot of different hats over the years. Divorced single mom fresh out of the military working nights in a plastics factory all the way to teaching cardio kickboxing and zumba at the YMCA.

I've been married to my honey bunny for 22 years now. He's absolutely the best and tries to keep me in check as much as possible because I am a crazy person that stacks too much on her plate and then does it all no matter what. Even if it drives everyone nuts!

I love the kind of romances where you know what you're getting. I don't like happily for now. That just feels like cheating to me. I also don't like love triangles. I'm an easy girl and I like my books like I like my men...lol! Uncomplicated. So if you're reading my books, you know that no matter what, there's a happily ever after!



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