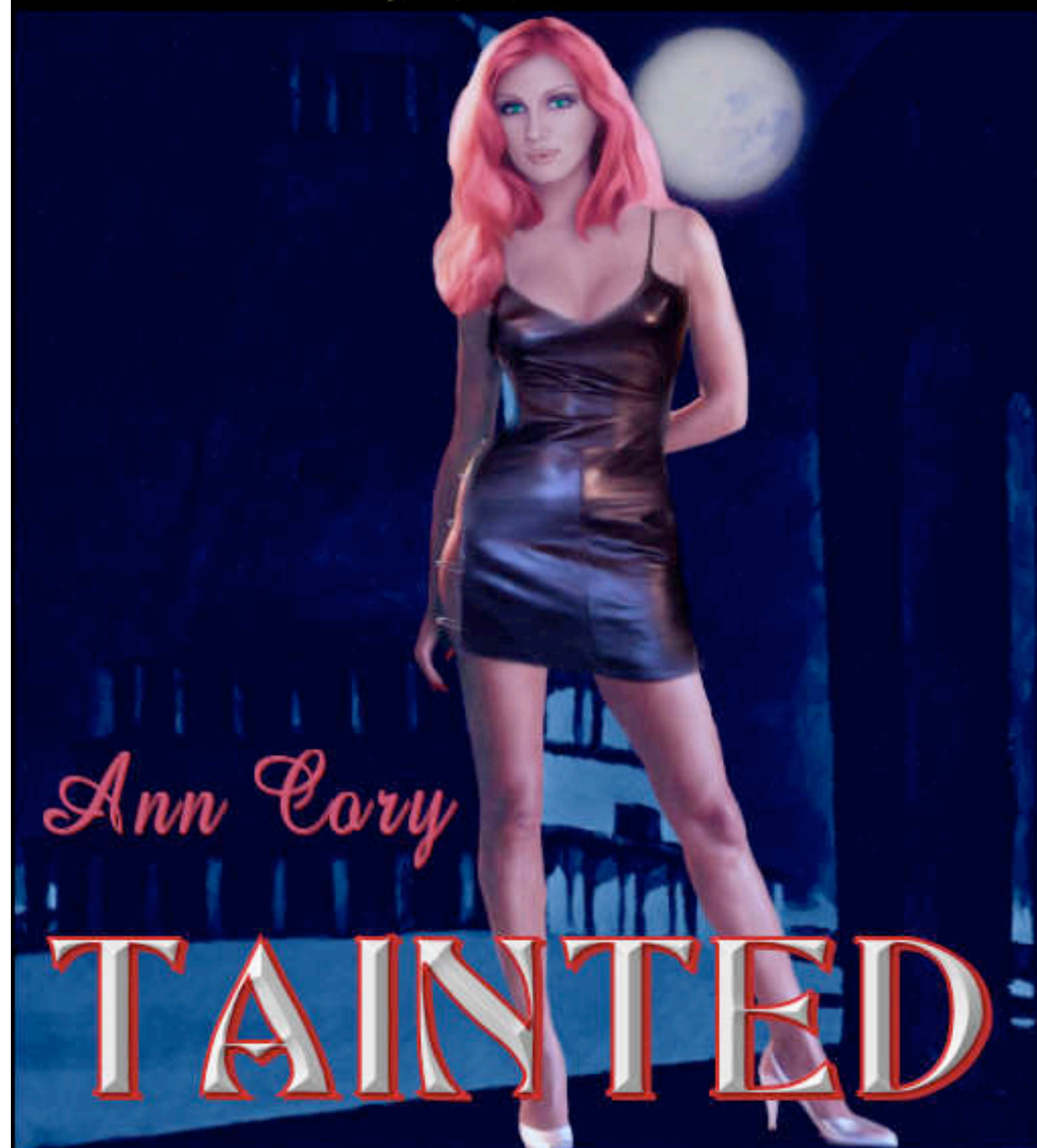


* *Lady Libell Press* *



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Tainted

Her eyes were red flames, lighting up the darkened room like oval torches. Glints of her elongated teeth reflected against the pale moon. Thomas couldn't help being drawn to her magnetic sexuality. Whether it was fear or desire, he wasn't sure. He saw something familiar about her, but his mind whirled in a million different directions. Heat generated from her body to his, soaking him in sweet-smelling sweat. There would be no denying her. He wasn't that strong.

Nails doused in crimson tore at his belt buckle and ripped his pants to shreds. Berry-stained nipples grazed against his body, sending shivers up and down his spine. She nestled between his legs, her fangs hovering over the fleshy part of his inner thigh.

His breath caught in his throat as he waited for the moment their sharpened points would pierce his skin.

Thomas jerked awake and fumbled for the sides of his bed, anything to remind him where he was. Sweat gathered around his neck and chest, plastering strands of hair to his skin. Three times in a week, he had the same dream and awakened in the same exact part of the dream—seconds before the vampire vixen ravished him. One day, he hoped to explore the way her body looked and felt undulating above him.

His cock stood erect, evidence of his arousal. The mystery woman from his dream remained the same every time. He couldn't make out all her features, but he liked what little he'd seen. Long, luxurious red hair blazed like fire against the last remnants of sunlight.

After a quick shower, he dressed in his usual attire of jeans, black shirt, and a long ranger coat. The night air smelled of rain as he walked down Lane and Court Street to the Vintages Bar for a drink. At this point, he'd choke down anything if it offered relief to his parched throat.

Thomas noticed his longtime pal, Max, tending the bar and hopped on the rusty stool.

“What's your poison?”

“Anything wet. I swear I’ve got an unquenchable thirst tonight.” Thomas clawed at his throat for added emphasis.

“Probably the full moon.”

Thomas cracked his knuckles and inspected a nail. “Why do you say that?”

Max shrugged his shoulders and placed a shot glass on the counter. “Hell if I know. Seems to me if there’s something out of the ordinary going on with a person, it’s because of a full moon.”

Thomas laughed and chugged back the liquid. Its thickness oozed down and coated his tongue. He swallowed a couple times but nothing gave him relief.

“Got something thinner, more watered down? This one’s a bit pasty.”

“Sure thing.” Max poured another shot glass full, and rested his elbows on the counter, staring off at the vagabonds pooling around the bar.

This time Thomas felt the liquid slide down his throat. “Now that one’s got bite.”

“I can only serve what I’m given, you know? No rhyme or reason, just whatever’s delivered. I don’t get much say in where our product comes from, except I make sure it’s well inspected.”

“Understandable. Can’t be too careful these days, with all the shortages and disease. Everything has to be scrutinized, cleaned, and sanitized. Even then you risk consuming tainted food and drink.”

Max wiped the counter down with a towel then tossed the rag over his shoulder. “Maybe you’re coming down with something.”

Thomas shuddered. “When people make a comment like that, it’s the same as a curse. Tomorrow I’ll wake up sicker than a dog. Thanks.”

“Anytime. You know better than to come in here and leave with a smile. Not my nature.”

Thomas shook his head and climbed off the stool. “Don’t know what I was thinking. Well, I’ve got stuff to do, so I’ll check you out later. Night.”

“Take it easy, seeing how you’re sick and all.”

Thomas put his hand up and bared his middle finger. “You’re number one with me, Max.”

“Glad to help. Now get out of here before I get sick, too.”

A brisk wind played at his face as he stepped into the night. Cool and refreshing, much like the drink he had enjoyed. His boots still needed broken in, and they burned against his heels when he walked.

Thomas knelt to adjust one when a sudden movement caught his attention from the corner of his eye.

Fiery red hair, flailing like a cape, came attached to a svelte figure in black. He could have sworn she was the woman from his dreams. With his curiosity piqued, he followed her. It would eat away at him all night if he didn’t find out.

Careful to stay far enough back to not pose a threat, he watched her silhouette strut into the darkness. Motivated by the view, he smiled to himself. A tight black number held together with large safety pins hugged her body. It exposed just enough skin to tantalize him. Her high heels made scuffing noises along the concrete, echoing through the desolate streets.

She stopped at the corner and looked both ways. The moment she stuck out her foot, a large truck zoomed by. Startled, she jerked back and lost her balance, falling roughly to the cement.

A surge of concern prompted him to run over to see if she was hurt.

“Pardon me, ma’am, are you okay?” He made sure to not touch her or give her the wrong idea.

She paused a moment to look him over before her eyes narrowed to slits. “Did you see that blazing fool driving like a bat out of hell? Fucker nearly ran me over!”

Thomas felt the wind knocked out of him. It didn’t make sense, but the hair and her blazing eyes screamed that she was the woman from his dreams.

“I agree. He was driving like a maniac.”

“Damn asshole.” She reached for her shoe, which was lying on its side, and sighed heavily. “Great, there go my favorite shoes.”

“Better your shoe than your whole foot.” Thomas held out his hand to help her up.

Her face softened and she smiled. Green eyes, deep as emeralds, stared into his, as if seeing him for the first time. “That’s a nice way to think about it, thank you. By the way, I’m Jordana.”

“Thomas.” He steadied his weight and pulled her up.

An abrupt gasp escaped her throat, and she leaned into him quickly. “I think I’ve sprained my ankle; it hurts to step on it.”

He gripped her tighter and hoped she couldn’t see the bulge growing inside his pants. The faint aroma of honeysuckle exuding from her hair made him dizzy.

“Don’t take this the wrong way, but if you’d like, I can help walk you home. Or carry you, whichever is easiest.”

“You’d carry me twelve blocks?”

“You say that as if you don’t believe I have a gentlemanly bone in my body.”

She laughed and shook her head, her red hair fanning about her shoulders. “No, the fact you came over to see if I was okay was a good indicator you are a perfect gentleman. I’m just not used to such royal treatment.”

“As pretty as you are, you should be.”

“You know your flattery. Now, as much as I’d love to dangle in your arms like Fay Wray meets King Kong, I think I can hobble along. With a little help, of course.”

“My pleasure.”

They walked in silence. Questions plagued his mind. He'd never seen her before, except in dreams. It did not make sense. He looked up into the night sky and chuckled to himself. Damn if the moon wasn't full. Maybe Max was right.

"This is it." She pointed to a small apartment building.

Thomas helped her up the stairs and waited for her to unlock the door.

"You should prop up your ankle with a pillow or something," he mumbled, feeling awkward at this point.

She opened the door and pulled on his arm.

"I'm not done needing your assistance, yet." Her eyes sparkled with mischief, catering to the incessant nudging of his erection against his pants. "My bedroom is down the hall to the left."

He helped her along, while catching glimpses of the place she called home. There was a definite Goth feel to it. Wrought iron sconces, lots of candles, and splashes of red were everywhere.

Jordana sat on the edge of her bed and slowly rolled her stockings down. The smell of her sex lingered in the air.

"Uh-oh. Looks like I cut myself when I fell."

She got up and held her fingertip in front of his face. A shiny coat of blood glistened against the moonlight. The scent wafted around the room, mixing with her feminine aroma. Jesus, he wanted her so badly.

Hunger stirred in his stomach; churning away at the blood he'd drank earlier at the bar. He couldn't stop the effects, even if he wanted to.

Pressure formed in his gums from the heaviness of his fangs. His need to drink in her essence overwhelmed him.

Jordana waved her finger in front of him, taunting, teasing. The room tunneled and shrank, his chest tightening. His lungs felt like they would burst.

"You know you want it." Her voice was faint, her lips puckered like ripe, juicy cherries.

She said more, he could tell by the way her lips moved, but she didn't make a sound.

"What did you say?"

"I said, it's hot in here, isn't it?"

The room expanded back out, and his breathing went back to normal. Thomas reached up with the back of his hand and wiped away a layer of sweat. He'd heard her wrong. No, she wasn't a vampire; she couldn't be. It had all been a dream.

"I can't ever get the Super to fix my air conditioner, so I'm usually out most of the night."

She took an ice cube from the freezer and touched it to her skin. The cube melted instantly, and clear streams of water trailed between her breasts. The temperature in the room turned scorching, and Thomas quickly removed his jacket.

Her eyes sparkled, as she looked him up and down approvingly.

“There’s something about you, but I can’t put my finger on it. I’m drawn to you, like I know you. Is that possible?”

Thomas shrugged, swallowing the lump in his throat. He had a difficult time looking away while she slid another ice cube along her skin, the cool water pooling between her breasts. Stiff nipples pushed along the bodice of the dress. If this was love, he was in trouble. But it was a good kind of trouble.

“I think I’m falling for you.” Her voice soothed him.

The gap between them narrowed as she moved forward. “Would you mind?” She turned her back to him, glancing over her shoulder with a suggestive smile.

Four safety pins later, the dress slid down, revealing a black leather thong.

She reached back and slid her hand down his stomach and over his pants, stopping at the noticeable bulge.

“What’s this? I take it you like what you see?”

He stared at the slope of her neck. Soft, pale skin. Inside he ached to remember the tender contours of a woman. It had been too many years.

Thomas picked her up and laid her on the bed, pulling off her panties in a single swipe. His own clothes were off in seconds, and he knelt over her, spreading her thighs wide. With his heated fingertips, he reached down and doused them inside her wetness.

“I’m revved up myself.” Her voice was husky, laced with urgency.

He propped her legs over his shoulders and entered her, sucking in his breath as her drenched warmth encircled him.

Jordana reached up and gripped the headboard. “Damn, see what you do to me?”

Thomas delved in deeper, thrusting as far inside her as he could go. Layers of her pussy swallowed him; inner folds clutched him, milking him dry. The friction along his shaft drove him wild, but he couldn’t ignore what he really wanted.

He spread her legs wider and leaned forward. The need to taste and feast on her purity overpowered his moral judgments. It wasn’t right for him to take without asking, but his mind and all its workings were quickly shutting down. All he wanted was to satisfy the urges and quiet the voices of addiction.

Thomas found the side of her neck and nuzzled as close as he could, still plummeting inside her.

Her moans and sighs were music to his ears, and he sensed she was close to orgasm. To further her along, he rubbed at her swollen nub until it was raw and raised. Faster he moved, distracting her as best he could, brushing his lips against the bittersweet flesh of her swan-like neck.

His fangs found the warm spot and punctured her skin. Simultaneously, his body released, intense spasms shooting throughout his entire body. Jordana cried

out, but he would not let go, not yet.

He suckled at her, replenishing his body with her decadent life. Warmth coated his tongue and dripped into his stomach, staving off the voices that controlled him. Tonight he would be satisfied.

When he had his fill, he knelt back on his legs. “Did you make it?” The last thing he wanted was to deprive her of pleasure.

“Yes. It was incredible.”

He smiled and crawled over to lie next to her on his side, tracing his fingertips along her breasts. The cadence of his breath returned to normal, and he kissed at her heaving fleshy mounds.

Thomas fought off the guilty thoughts. Only once. He wouldn’t bite her again. It was different this time, and he was sure it was, because she meant something more to him. This wasn’t a one-night stand; he wanted to see her again, maybe exclusively. His way of life was not something he wished on anyone, especially the beauty next to him.

She glanced at him, a coy smile creeping along her face. “Are you up for another round?”

Her voice sounded hopeful, but his body longed to recuperate. After an intense feeding, his body was bloated and uncomfortable for hours. Still, she wanted more, and he would not deny her. “I’d be happy to pleasure you if you’d like.”

She sat up and put her arms on either side of him, her eyes blazing. “I think it’s my turn to take a little something from you.”

A sick feeling washed over him as he saw the dream coming to fruition before his eyes. She straddled him and pressed her hands hard against his chest. Her nails had grown long and jagged. Jade green eyes turned scarlet as she eyed him hungrily.

Panic paralyzed him beneath her. “Impossible! I only bit you once. No one turns after a single bite!”

Jordana flung her hair away from her neck and revealed previous bite marks.

“Actually, my sweet, I was on my way to donate a little blood to someone when you showed up. Lucky for me, too. You’re a much better lover. It would have been to my disadvantage to let him be the one to change me.”

She bared her fangs, her thighs pressing into him like a vice grip.

“I had no idea. It was wrong of me to take without asking. Please forgive me,” Thomas said.

The look on her face told him all he needed to know. His selfishness would not go unpunished.

“So now that we’ve come clean with who we really are, let’s find a compromise. A life for a life.”

“Jordana, listen to me. There are some things you don’t know about this way of

life. Because I drank from you, and someone else already drank from you, it tainted your blood. Do you understand? It changed the dynamics of your blood. I'm going to get very sick. If you bite me now, I'll die."

"You're wrong."

"No, I swear. Mixing blood with another is like poison for us, and it will take its time to pass through me. Honestly, biting me now will kill me."

"You weren't too worried about my feelings when you drank from me and decided my fate. Looks like I hold your fate in my hands now. I promise to be gentle."

Her eyes were red flames, lighting up the darkened room like oval torches. Glints of her elongated teeth reflected against the pale moon. Berry-stained nipples grazed against his body, sending shivers up and down his spine. She nestled between his legs, her fangs hovering over the fleshy part of his inner thigh.

His breath caught in his throat as he waited for the moment they would pierce his skin. Thomas steadied himself. This time it wasn't a dream, and he'd never wake again.

The End

About the Author

Ann Cory

Erotic romance author, Ann Cory, invites you to sample her literary offerings in the hopes of leaving you with an acquired taste for sophisticated reading.

Visit her website at <http://www.anncory.com> to see what else she has on the publication menu.

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