



LILITH SUMMONED

ALAYNE WARREN

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Dedication:

**To everyone who believes in Witches and
Warlocks – Happy Samhain!**

Ritual

My tools were gathered upon the grass at my feet. No longer green and lush, the browns and ambers of autumn had rushed in, turning the grass and trees around me into burnished gold. The air held a chill, not quite cold, that made my nipples harden and reach toward that caressing finger of air.

Nakedness at night was my favorite indulgence. My second would be my rituals, and on this night before Samhain, like no other, I was in my element. I love everything about Samhain—its colors, its chants, its magical tools and even more magical words. I love feeling the ability to connect with my departed loved ones, but more so, the feeling that I'm beginning a period of my life anew.

October thirty-first is not just Halloween, is not just Samhain or Ancestor Night, but is also the beginning of the Celtic New Year. And I, Lilith, am a practicing Wiccan Priestess. For me, naked in the moonlight of a harvest moon, alone on a cliff-side overlooking the sea, about to begin my yearly ritual, there is no better place on earth. It was the eve of Samhain, true, but I

had rituals that needed to be done early to allow me more time for tomorrow night's festivities.

I could smell the salt from the water hundreds of feet below me. As I stood a few inches from the edge of the bluffs and raised my head and arms to catch the last lingering brushes of the breeze, I almost felt as if I could feel the spray from the waves upon my bare skin. I couldn't, of course, but the illusion is there.

Some of my fellow brothers and sisters have never understood why I performed my particular ritual on the eve of Samhain, with only myself for company. Why not wait until we're all gathered together before invoking the spirit of my dearly departed? Why, indeed?

Ancestor Night has, for each individual, a special meaning. Some members of the coven asked guidance from their passed mothers, fathers, grandparents or siblings. I, in my special ritual on the eve of Samhain, always asked for guidance from Conroy, the husband and life partner I had lost over six years earlier.

Conroy, as his Irish Gaelic name implies, was beyond wise. He was the counterpart to my foolishness, the polar opposite of my hardheadedness. Conroy was, quite simply, the love of my life.

When we first met, I was already a practicing Wiccan. Conroy thought me foolish—and undeniably beautiful. Our love and passion was instantaneous, something that could not be denied. Neither of us wanted to deny it, so it all worked out in the end.

Wiccans, contrary to popular belief, are not the

types of witches and wizards that can defy the course of what life throws in front of us. Conroy was killed in a boating accident, swept overboard by waves that not even the strongest practitioner of magic could control.

I've grieved for him since. Conroy was my lover, my best friend, and my partner in all things. His death has never become less of a burden; in fact, as time goes on, sorrow begins to settle heavier and heavier upon my heart.

I have my coven, I have my friends, and I have my fellow believers. What I don't have is the feeling of love and security that Conroy brought to me. The only man to ever make me feel whole has long since passed the boundaries of this earth, and I am still floundering around, lost and helpless without his steady presence.

On this night, as on every Samhain eve since Conroy's passing, I would invoke his spirit to guide me through the coming year. There was calm in the ritual, peacefulness in knowing that I would be able to commune with him once again, if only for a little while.

This ritual was my salvation, giving me the strength to live another year without the comfort of being in his arms.

I had already swept the area for my circle, and outlined it with salt. The black Goddess candle sat at the top left corner of my altar, made up of my black satin altar cloth, my ritual tools, and a picture of Conroy and I, taken so many years earlier, along this

very same bluff.

I leaned down and carefully place the black God candle at the top right corner of the altar, and set breads on the altar an equal distance between the two tapers. On the pentacle that was sewn into the center of my altar cloth, I placed more bread, fresh vegetables, and apples.

The wind picked up, and I felt it breathe upon my naked skin. I had already bathed and purified myself in preparation of the ceremony. I was wearing nothing but my own cloak of waist-length sable hair and the ring that Conroy had given me on our first wedding anniversary. A platinum band encircled with pentacles and pentagrams, it was my most cherished possession.

I sat down in front of my altar and did a silent meditation to ground myself. Then I rose to cast the circle, and began my ritual.

I lit the Goddess candle and invoked her guidance.

"Dark Mother, rule of the night, Goddess of death and rebirth, Hear and behold your Child this night as I honor Thee and Thy realm. I stand humbly before Thee, asking for Thy blessing and favor. Lift, now, the Veil between the world, as this time-out-of-time begins, that I may commune with my ancestors as they journey to the Summerlands."

I stepped back from the altar, never letting my gaze wander from the Goddess candle. The flame flickered in the wind off the sea, and seemed to grow brighter and larger before my eyes. The Goddess was listening.

I moved to the God candle and prepared to invoke his guidance.

"Dark Father, aged Consort of the Crone, Lord of the Underworld, Hear and behold your Child this night as I honor Thee and Thy realm. I stand between Thee and Thy Lady, asking for blessing and favor. As this time-out-of-time approaches, stand ever guard as the Veil lifts, keep safe my ancestors, and all of my loved ones as they journey to the Summerlands."

The God candle was still—no wind rose to ease its flame along. I concentrated harder, projecting my wish for safe journey as Conroy made the journey between our two worlds. It seemed as if hours passed, days, but I know it was only minutes before the flame finally jumped to life.

I reached for an apple from my altar, and stepped back once again. The God and Goddess were listening.

"Tonight as the barrier between the two realms grows thin, Spirits walk amongst us, once again. They be family, friends, and foes, pets and wildlife, fishes and crows. But be we still mindful of the Wee Folk at play, elves, fey, brownies, and sidhe."

I used my Bolline to cut the apple crosswise, revealing the symbolic pentagram at the core of the fruit. Taking a bite out of one half of the apple, I set it back down on the Pentacle of my altar.

"Some to trick, some to treat, some to purposely misguide our feet. Stay we on the paths we know, as planting sacred apples we go."

I lifted my wand to bless the Feast of the Dead. Waving it over the bread, vegetables, and fruit, I offered the feast to the God and Goddess.

"This Feast I shall leave on my doorstep all night. In my

window one candle should burn bright, to help my loved ones find their way as they travel this eve, and this night, until day. Bless this offering, both Lady and Lord, of breads and fruits, greens and gourds."

I carefully placed my wand back on the altar and bowed my head, silent as both Lord and Lady hopefully received my blessing. After minutes of silence, I lit the black votive candle that was resting inside my cauldron.

"Dark Mother, Your cauldron is a well of death and rebirth. Dark Father, Your sword both protects and annihilates. Hear me now as the past year slowly dies, only to be reborn again. Tomorrow, the last of the Harvests shall be complete. This symbolic Harvest is of my thought-seeds, planted and nurtured throughout this past year. May the good come to pass and the bad be cast aside. With Your divine guidance and protection, I step into the New Year. May I have good health, prosperity, and happiness."

With the flame of the black votive candle, I lit the wick of the white pillar that also rested in the cauldron.

"As the New Year is born, we are all reborn with new hopes and dreams. Guide me in the future as in the past. Give me strength and courage, knowledge and fulfillment. Assist me as I attempt to achieve my goals."

I snuffed the black votive and replaced it with a new one. I removed the white pillar and moved it to center of my altar. I stared into the flame, thinking of my goals for the coming year. Please, I thought, guide me as I seek to begin my life anew. I do not wish to forget Conroy, but to replace my sorrow with only happy memories of what once was. I do not seek a

replacement for my love, but the ability to live my once as I once did—happy, fulfilled, and peaceful. I hoped on all that I held holy that the God and Goddess were listening. I could not make it through another year with this heavy heart, with this weight upon my heart and soul.

"Every beginning has an ending, and every ending is a new beginning. In Life is Death, and in Death is Life. Watch over me, my loved ones, and all of my Brothers and Sisters, here and departed, who tonight are joined together again for fellowship and celebration. Bless us all as we light our bonfires, our hearth fires, and the eternal fires in our hearts. Guide us and protect us, tonight and throughout the coming year. Blessed Be! Blessed Be!"

I raised my arms high above my head, taking in the breeze, the salt of the ocean, the spill of the moon. I embraced those of my ancestors who were listening, who would guide me and, I hoped, redeem me. I reached out to them all—my Brothers and Sisters, Conroy, every man and woman on Earth. I embraced them, and in return, I hugged my arms around myself to gather inside me their love and pride.

I had chosen not to do spellworking after the ritual, since all of my spells for protection and self-confidence would be done tomorrow, on Samhain, in the presence of my brethren. Instead, I celebrated the ritual with a few small bites of cake and swigs of ale, then closed my circle.

The white pillar candle I would take home with me, to leave burning for the night in my window.

My ritual was finished. Now I could only hope for the best, that the God and Goddess had heard my

pleas and accepted my feast and blessings, and would guide and protect me through the coming year.

After all of my instruments were put away, I lay flat on my back in the slightly damp grass, watching the moon above me and feeling the sway of the ocean through the ground under my body.

And then Conroy was there, not in person, but in spirit. I couldn't see him, but his voice whispered in my ear like a caress, so perfect that for a moment I was sure I could turn my head and catch sight of him.

"Go to him," he said, and I know that I frowned.

"Go to whom?" I asked. I didn't dare turn my head for fear that any movement would cause his spirit to flee.

"The one who calls you. The Warlock who has petitioned the God and Goddess for help of his own, as you have."

The wind stirred, and I felt Conroy's hands upon my body. Or I thought I did, as the breeze blew over my naked skin and things low in my body pulled tight and sharp.

"Go to him, my love, for he needs you as I no longer do. I have work to do in the Summerlands, and you still have work to do upon the Earth."

He wasn't here, not in a physical form, but I felt anyway his lips press upon my own in a lingering caress. "Go the Sun Warlock, Lilith, and allow him to ease your pain as you ease his in return."

And then he was gone, as was the wind. The ocean below me was silent, and the world darkened as the almost full moon slipped behind a bank of clouds.

Go the Sun Warlock, he'd said. I knew exactly whom he meant, and I didn't want to go. But Conroy had told me that the Warlock could ease my pain—and isn't that exactly what I'd asked the God and Goddess to do?

I gathered my silk bag, full of the tools I'd used in ritual, and gathered the white candle in my free hand. As I walked the open field back to my home, I wondered how in the world I could possibly ease someone's pain, when my own filled my heart to overflowing.

Especially the pain of a man I could not bear to look upon.

Succubus

I have been obsessed with the thought of summoning a succubus for so long that I can no longer remember when the idea first came to me.

Succubus comes from the Latin word *succubare*, which means, literally, to lie under. A succubus is a female demon that comes to men, usually in their sleep, to seduce them and have sexual intercourse with them, thus sucking up their power and life force—again, literally—often times to the point of exhaustion or death for the male who has summoned her.

When I put it that way, it sounds insane. What man, even one who is starved for sexual attention, wants to be sucked dry to the point of death?

I don't want to die, but I also refuse to live another year without the touch of a woman to bring me sexual fulfillment. You would think it would be easy for me to ease this sexual hunger that throbs and thrashes inside of me. I am, after all, a Warlock. A Sun Warlock, to be exact, with powers that other Witches and Warlock's can only dream of.

The tendency to avoid other people, along with

their aversion to me, puts a damper on human contact.

If you asked members of the general population why they avoid me, or, for that matter, the members of my coven, you'd undoubtedly get one of three answers. First of all, my power scares them. Secondly, I'm not that friendly. And last but not least, the scar that runs down the left side of my face has the ability to frighten more than just small children and household pets.

I have to admit that my powers are large, and for those unschooled in their meaning, intimidating. A Sun Warlock can, as the name implies, harness certain energies of the sun, and turn those energies into manifested powers. I have learned to tap into the infinite power of the sun, and to turn around and use that power for other means.

My actual physical attributes can, and do, change according to whatever ritual of magic I am employing at any given time. My skin may become warm to the touch, my eyes might glow like the embers of the sun, and my hair color can surprisingly change to the color of whatever fire body I am close to. I am a Sun Warlock, yes, but I can also use the energy of smaller bodies of fire, such as a bonfire or even the small flame of a candle. I am also surrounded by a small, warm glow of light that never disappears. Not actual shining, but the *illusion* of shining.

As for my actual powers, they are many, and can be used in a variety of ways. I can actually cause gravity to change for a person or object. I can enwrap

myself in a sphere of light and thus have no need for food, water, or air. I can summon a sphere of light to embrace the darkness, without being in the actual vicinity of a flame. I can harness the power of the sun into a fireball. During the hours of sunlight, I can silently send a message to another Sun Warlock, regardless of his physical distance from me. I can also make metal so hot to the touch that it becomes a brand.

That leads me to my scar. I can withstand heat that no normal human, witch or warlock, could ever withstand. But I, like everyone else, am susceptible to a steel blade. When that blade has been heated up to temperatures beyond endurance, and is slashed in my direction, I am powerless to stop it. And I was powerless, when having extended my abilities to heat the blade to use upon my enemy, he turned it onto me.

I used to believe that I was a handsome man. Before I became disfigured, before I realized that no woman would willingly come to my bed.

I'm not unfriendly, as my brothers and sisters believe. I have simply housed myself and my emotions behind a wall of my own making, to guard myself from the emotional harm that others unknowingly inflict upon me.

Which is why it has been over nineteen years since I've lain with a woman. And is why, even with the possibility that it may kill me, I have chosen to summon a succubus to relieve the sexual frustrations of my very human body.

A lifetime ago, it seems, I wished for the love of a woman to compliment me. I even had it once, during a time when I was just coming into my powers. The results were disastrous, and I have since learned that for all the light and warmth that I can wrap around myself, love is nothing but another illusion to bathe myself in.

Now, I'll settle for sex that will purge my mind of everything I once had, and then lost. My powers are at their fullest strength in the daytime, when the sun shines pure and bright over the land. But summoning a succubus is tricky business—it's been attempted, sometimes with tricky results, for hundreds upon hundreds of years. Through my study of the matter, I've learned that it's a ritual best done in the night, with only the pale light of the moon shining down.

Which is why I stand naked in the clearing in the woods behind my home, on the eve of Samhain, with only the moon to light my way. I live high on a bluff overlooking the ocean, as distanced and alone, as cut off from the rest of the world, as I myself am. I spend very little time staring at the sea, but when I perform my rituals, I come to the clearing that nature has provided between the forest of trees.

I've already made my protective circle with a white cord, and an outer circle of protection made with crushed herbs. I have five black candles spaced equidistant apart inside the inner circle, with my five talismans outside of it. The talismans—one for good fortune, one for success in my ritual, one for happiness, and two crystals symbolizing a wizard at

work and a couple engaging in sex—were placed beside the five candles on the outside of my inner circle.

It was time to enter the inner circle and summon the succubus. I had no wish for true love, no desire to find a woman who would fulfill all of my fantasies and be my partner in life. All I wished, on this eve of Samhain, was for a woman—spirit, demon, or a mixture of the two—to come to me and take away the longing that I felt.

I entered naked and sat down in the middle of the circle. I focused myself, which is hard to do away from the power of the sun that usually guides my hand of power. But I needed to fully separate myself from the woods around me, from the ground beneath me, from the breeze that carried the scent of the ocean to my nose.

It might have been minutes, or it could possibly have been hours. Regardless of how long it took, I finally felt centered, more alone than I can ever remember being. I lit all five of the candles, and lay upon the hard ground in the pentagram position with my arms straight out from my side and my legs apart.

There are no magical words to summon a succubus. Everyone who has ever done it—whether they've succeeded or failed—uses their own words of magic and power to call this sentient being to them.

My words echoed through the trees that were quickly losing all of their leaves.

"God and Goddess, on this night before the most holy of nights, please grant my wish for sexual release. Please send to me one of Thy servants, to ease my longing and need.

Help me to let go of my pain of the last years, and to start anew for the coming year. Please hear my plea, Lord and Lady, and grant your humble servant his one remaining wish."

I watched as my words drifted up towards the night sky, and the almost full moon. I listened to myself as I told the powers-that-be about my needs, my longings, my desire to be filled, for this night, with the healing power of touch from a being who would not be disgusted with my scars, who would expect nothing from me, and who would release my pent-up desires through the most basic act of sex.

I heard the words drift away, and I closed my eyes against the mocking of the moon. The breeze died down, and my skin grew warm, even without the energies of the sun.

I was as calm and peaceful as I could be. My ritual was done, and the only thing left to do now was wait.

So I closed my eyes and focused on the small flames from the candles, whose light flickered against my closed lids. I held on to the belief that she would come, and I waited.

Summons

“Go to the Sun Warlock, he says. Ease his pain and allow him to ease your own. Bullshit.” I normally refrained from cursing, but desperate times called for desperate measures.

I’d hastily thrown a black cloak over my nakedness after I’d placed my candle in the window of my home. I didn’t want to go to him. I freely admitted it, and part of me continued to curse Conroy as I followed the path that would lead from my land to the warlock’s.

We were neighbors. It’s amazing that two people who live so close would actually be strangers. Our houses were the only two on this particular patch of land above the sea. We belonged to the same coven, believed in the same God and Goddess, celebrated the same holidays with the same brethren.

And were total opposites, in every way that mattered.

As I slowly made my way towards the house that Gareth called home—slowly, so deliberately slowly—I admitted to myself that I purposely avoided him whenever I could. Contrary to what some people

might think, it wasn't his scarred face that kept me from his company. It wasn't even his powers, although I had heard stories of exactly what those powers could do.

I even know why he lived alone, why he *felt* alone, why he had no female companion—and hadn't for many, many years. I knew the horror of what had befallen Gareth the Sun Warlock, but even that fact wasn't why I kept my distance.

I avoided him, if at all possible, because looking into his eyes with their pain, sorrow, and misery was too much like looking into a mirror and seeing my own reflection.

He had loved and lost. Loved strong and deeply, and lost swiftly and terribly. His pain reminded me too much of the burden I carried in my own heart. When you live life only trying to get through the next day, surrounded by pain and grief that holds physical feeling, it's too hard to be around others who feel the same.

I know for a fact that he mistook my understanding of his grief as pity. I'm sure he thought that I was repulsed by his scar. There are many, even in our own coven, who *do* pity him, who *are* repulsed by his physical appearance. I am not one of them, but I've never taken the time to explain that to him.

To explain would mean that I would have to tell him why I understand, all too well, exactly how he feels. It would mean opening my own wounds, laying myself bare to his exploration—and I've never felt strong enough to do that.

Why couldn't Conroy have just eased my fears of spending the rest of my life alone, without the comfort of love? Why didn't he tell me that things would be all right, that my life path would straighten itself out in its own due time?

Why, God and Goddess, did he tell me to go to Gareth? How could we possibly ease each others pain?

Now it didn't matter why, because I was at the woods that bordered the Sun Warlock's property. As I entered deeper into the trees that hid his home from view, I saw the flicker of candles through the almost bare branches.

I was almost upon him before I saw him. He was engaged in his own ritual, as I should have known he would be. Most Wiccans did some type of personal cleansing or ritual before the actual Samhain activities.

I stood silent a few yards from his protective circle, and couldn't stop the way my heart sped up and my palms turned slightly damp. If my body tightened low in my belly, if my nipples stood up hard against the material of my cloak, I blamed it on the chill of the night wind.

There was nothing repulsive about Gareth. He lay, silent and unmoving, within his circle. The arms straight out at his sides were golden, reflecting the light of the moon, giving him a slight glow as he lay there. His eyes were closed, but I knew that when he opened them, they would be two orbs of brilliant blue, with irises the same golden color as his skin.

The scar really did nothing to take away from his pleasing appearance. His face was all hard lines and angles, a strong nose that I'd once heard described as Roman, and lips that were so full and ripe that they looked like sun-kissed fruit.

I told myself that I wasn't trespassing, wasn't spying, as I allowed my gaze to travel across his chest. He was muscular, more so than I would have ever noticed when we were among others. A light sprinkling of hair, darker in color than the golden curls of his head, arrowed down to his groin.

I blamed the pounding of my heart and the thrum inside my veins on the night and the magic that I could feel. I knew, even as I did so, that I was lying. Gareth was beautiful, naked and shining in the moonlight. His penis was full and thick, fully aroused as it lay against the firm skin of his belly. His thighs looked powerful, even in rest. I found the sight of his feet, with their pale heels and arches, unbelievably arousing.

He was naked, and the fact did not escape me that under my cloak, so was I.

* * * *

I knew, when I heard the very human footsteps crackling over the leaves as she approached, that this was no succubus come to rescue me. It would seem my ritual was for not, that the God and Goddess had not seen fit to answer my pleas.

I should have expected it, but it still hurt. Hurt,

more than angered, and that told me just how far gone I was when it came to needing, *wanting*, sexual release.

I even knew who it was standing just a few feet away from my protective circle. Lilith, the Wiccan Priestess, the one woman who never looked at me with apprehension or pity. No, her understanding, her knowledge of me and my pain, was much worse.

She lived only minutes away. We worshipped together, celebrated together—but spoke only to each other when necessary. She didn't dislike me, or even fear me. I don't think she pitied me, in the way that others did. No, she was empathetic of me—and that, somehow, was a hundred times worse.

My body was still aroused, my member still hard at attention. I was sure that when the synapses from my brain finally fired in its direction, that it realized it wasn't about to get the sexual release it so desperately craved, that it would go back to its regular state.

Right now, though, I still wanted, and my body still ached with the need for satisfaction.

I opened my eyes, and my gaze immediately fell upon Lilith. She was beautiful, there was no way around that. Not bright and shining beauty, like Moira had possessed, but a dark beauty that made her all that more desirable.

My throat had closed up at the thought of Moira, as it almost always did. But tonight, with my eyes upon Lilith and her dark chocolate eyes, her black stream of hair, her dark skin that shone in the moonlight, the images that usually followed the

thought of Moira were strangely absent.

"You might as well come closer, Lilith, and tell me why you've come." As the ceremony was obviously over, as my wish was not to be granted, I extinguished the candles and closed my circle. My eyes once again alit upon Lilith, who was still standing silently a few feet away, her left hand closed at the throat of her cloak, as if she were either cold or afraid.

I knew she wasn't cold, as the night wind had died down, and the smell of the sea was no longer drifting up to the clearing. And even though she may have been wary, I knew that she was not afraid. She was one of the few who had never—even after Moira's death—been afraid of me.

I didn't know what to make of her silence, or even her presence in the clearing.

"You have no ritual to make tonight?" I walked towards her as I asked, watching as those dark brown eyes widened, in something like surprise. It seemed to take her a moment to find her breath, and the ability to answer me.

"Ritual was already done, Gareth, Master of the Sun, and offerings were made and accepted."

"Good, good." I stood only a foot away from her now, with no shame in my nakedness. No shame at all, it would seem, even though I had never been in her company without the rest of our brethren. I had also her nude more times than I could count, but somehow, tonight, even shrouded with her cloak, her beauty was more appealing than I could ever

remember.

"Greetings, Lilith, High Priestess of Wicca, revered one of the God and Goddess. To what do I owe this visit?" My voice wasn't strained, although it took all of my willpower to keep from reaching out and smoothing the furrow that had been made between her brows as she frowned.

Lilith glanced away, towards my circle, and her reply was but a whisper. "I was sent to you, Master of the Sun. Summoned, as you will."

My breath hitched and I felt my hands ball into fists. It was my turn to look away. My words came out much harsher than I had intended. "Nonsense. That's not true. The God and Goddess would not have sent you, Lilith, for that would be a laugh in my direction."

Her brown eyes shone with anger. "You find me insulting, Gareth?" She made it a question, but the words were layered with a fine sheen of ice. Lilith was all fire and brimstone, but her voice was as cold as the hard frost that covered this clearing in the deep months of winter.

"I do not find you insulting, Lilith. I summoned someone, yes, but it most definitely was not you."

"And who did you summon so that I would be but a pale substitute?" Her gaze bored into mine; she, clothed in her cloak, and I naked and still fully aroused under the light of the moon.

Pale substitute? No, Lilith would never be second choice, to anyone in anything. But I had asked for a succubus, someone to use their sexual powers upon

me until I forget everything around me. Lilith was not second place—she was just not what I had asked for.

I suddenly did not want to tell her who, or what, I had summoned. I didn't want her anger, did not want her to think that I was disregarding her or her beauty, but I didn't want to see that same empathy that she usually reserved for me in her eyes.

Lilith angry, with fire in her eyes and ice in her voice, was much more desirable than Lilith with sorrow and empathy in every breath of her being.

"Does it matter?" My words were haughty, and I turned fully away from her to remove the candles from my circle. My ritual had obviously failed, so there was no more need for them.

"Yes, Gareth, I believe it matters very much. But if I am reading your circles correctly, understanding your candle positions and protective talismans, not to mention your nakedness, I can deduce on my own who you have summoned. Are you a fool, Sun Warlock? Do not tell me you don't know the dangers involved in summoning a succubus. And yet you would stand here and disregard my summons?" Her voice was no longer like ice. No, she'd warmed up during her speech, and her words now fell upon my bare back as I was turned away from her like the brimstone fires of Hell.

"How dare you?" I asked, turning back and walking towards her. "How dare you stand there, righteous from your own successful ritual, and lecture me on the dangers of my own? Do you know what it's like, Lilith, do you really, fully understand,

how desperate for human touch a man has to be to attempt to summon a succubus?"

I was close to her now, until our bodies were almost touching. I reached out a hand to her hair, pushing it back behind her ears, then trailing my fingertips along her forehead, her brow, her cheek, to finally rest against her lips. "Do you know, Lilith, what it's like to need the touch of someone so badly that it's a physical hurt? To need the feeling of being a part of someone else, with your body buried inside another being until you can't tell where you leave off and the other begins?"

I stepped even closer, until I could tell that she was naked under the cloak. I felt her nipples push against my bare chest, felt the curls at the juncture of her thighs align with my own. I shamelessly pushed my erection against her, rejoicing in her sharp intake of breath.

"Do you see now, Lilith, why I would be so desperate?" I roughly pushed myself away from her, turning towards the path that would take me, and my desire, back home.

I had only taken three steps when I heard her call to me.

"I understand desperation, Gareth, more than you could possibly know. I know the desire to be whole again, to be body to body, soul to soul with someone who can fill you from the inside out. I know, Sun Warlock, and I believe now that this understanding is the reason I was sent to you."

I turned back to the sound of her voice, to the

desire that I heard there. More importantly, to the true understanding that her words brought to me.

She stood naked and dark in the moonlight, her cloak at her feet, staring at me with daring in her eyes, with determination in her stance.

"You summoned a succubus, Master of the Sun, and the God and Goddess saw fit to send me in her place. I think, if you allow me the chance, that you might begin to understand that I am no poor substitute."

I stared at the thrust of her breasts, at the dark curls covering her most secret of places, and back up at her face.

Could it be possible, with all that was holy, that in summoning a succubus I had actually summoned Lilith?

I did not know. What I did know, right this moment, was that I would take what she offered, would lay her down upon the ground awash with the glow of the moon, and bury myself inside of her until I could no longer feel my own pain, like needles under my skin.

Redemption

I had no idea what I was doing. What possessed me to throw off my cloak, to let it fall to my feet so I stood naked in a clearing behind Gareth's home? Had I gone crazy?

Part of me felt that I had, indeed, lost my mind. The other part, the part that craved sexual release and the touch of a man upon my body, knew exactly what it was doing.

Did Conroy have this in mind when he sent me here? He had to have known—or at least the God and Goddess had to have known—what the Sun Warlock was attempting to do. What he wanted, what he wished to accomplish. So sending me here in response to his plea had to have been planned by someone with an agenda much different than my own.

Standing naked only feet from Gareth's failed ritual circle was most definitely not what *I* had planned. But God and Goddess knew that what you planned wasn't always what came to pass.

Conroy floated into her mind, the soft feel of his hands upon her breast, the feel of his lips against her

throat—but this time, the remembering didn't cause pain. It didn't cause her heart to miss a beat and her throat to close up. Instead, it was a peaceful remembering of things that once were, but were no more. His words echoed through her head, and she knew she was doing the right thing. She was living, as he wanted her to do. And she needed to make Gareth realize that living would not tarnish the memory of those who no longer were.

He'd come back to stand in front of her. His naked body glowed softly, whether from the light of the moon or the energy he'd harnessed from the daylight hours she didn't know.

Strong features, a pleasant chest lightly covered with bronze hair, strong thighs leading to feet that could only be described as manly. Gareth's hands were in fists at his side, and a look was in his eyes—part longing, part wariness, mostly desire.

"Is this what you wish?" His voice was full of hope, with a lacing of rejection. He was positive that she would change her mind.

"It is." I reached out with just the fingertips of my right hand and followed the path of the scar on his face. Lightly, so lightly, I traced it from his hairline, down across his cheek, to where it ended at his strong jawline.

He'd flinched at the first touch of my fingers there, but now stared at me with wide eyes. I let my fingers trace back up the other side of his face, the untarnished side, stopping first to let the pads of my fingers caress his lips. He had beautiful lips, full and

kissed by the brightness of his powers.

I rose on tiptoe to touch my own lips, darkly rouged, to press against his own. And gasped at the wave of power that shimmered from his lips into my own, down my body, to pool at the juncture of my thighs.

Gareth had grabbed hold of my arms, but at my sound none-to-gently pushed me away.

"See, Lilith, I repulse you. You have no business here, being with me. You are afraid. Of me. Damn it." He turned away, but not before I saw the pure sorrow in his eyes.

I reached out my hand to touch his shoulder, but he tried to brush it away. I grabbed onto his jaw and forced him to look at me.

"I do not fear you, Sun Warlock, nor am I the least bit repulsed. Did you not feel the power between us when our lips touched?"

He was torn, she could see it. He was physically aroused, his erection jumping against the hard plane of his stomach, but his eyes were so scared, so full of wanting that he was afraid would not be realized.

"I felt it, Priestess." He ran a hand through his golden hair as he glanced away from me. "You don't understand, Lilith." He took a deep breath and turned back to face me. "For years, I have lived with the knowledge that most people fear me. No woman has graced my bed for more time than I can remember. And you know why. Women fear me, Lilith, fear my scar, fear my powers, fear the passion they can see in my eyes."

"Gareth." His name was but a whisper upon my lips. "I can see your passion, and I am not afraid. No, I long to feel that same passion, long to see it reflected in my own eyes. It is past time, I believe, for you and I to begin our healing."

I didn't break from his gaze as I slowly walked backwards, until I knew I was inside the circle he had used to attempt his summons of a succubus. There was no magical power here now, nothing but the low thrum of my own power, and that I felt radiating from Gareth.

"Come, Gareth, and lie with me. I am no succubus, but I have needs and desires as great as your own. Come to me, Gareth."

I watched the indecision pass over his face. I saw him struggle, as he wondered if I meant what I said. As he remembered the demons of his own past, at what had happened the last time he'd lain with a woman.

And I saw desire and lust and passion win out as he stepped towards me. He needed my touch as much as I needed his, and tonight, on the eve of Samhain, perhaps we could bring more than sexual release to each other.

* * * *

She wasn't frightened of me. She desired me, wished for the same type of release that I did. Looking into her dark eyes as I knelt at her feet, I saw lust and passion. Lilith, Wiccan Priestess, wasn't here tonight

as a member of my coven, as a Priestess to lead me in my rituals, but simply as a woman looking for sexual release.

With me.

I felt so many emotions—desire, fear, a reversed sort of empathy for the pain she must have dealt with since Conroy's death. She had grieved for over six years, and although it wasn't as long for her as it had been for me, who was I to judge loneliness and need by the passing of the seasons?

Our situations were not the same, and yet they were. As I lay my head against her belly, inside the circle that I had prepared for another type of joining, I realized that Lilith and I were a lot alike. Lonely and alone, yet not really loners. Sad and sorrowful, and yet not that way by nature. We shared needs, and desires, and tonight those same qualities could bring us both passion beyond what we'd experienced in too many years to count.

I licked a path of fire around her bellybutton and rejoiced in her sharp intake of breath. The springy curls above her womanhood were soft against my face as I kissed her abdomen, gently kneeling before her to worship the offering that was she.

I wanted to do everything for her. Summoning a succubus wasn't just about having my needs met. Well, yes, it was, but meeting my needs meant more than lying there while a woman rode me until I was dry and no longer needy.

When I had been with Moira, so many years ago, some of the best times had been during my

pleasuring of her. Any man who doesn't gain pleasure by bringing his woman to orgasm is a fool. Hearing a woman's moans, her pants and sharply indrawn breath as you bring her to the peak of her desire again and again—those moments are just as pleasurable as reaching your own orgasm.

What I desired now, more than anything, was to bring pleasure to Lilith that she would not soon forget. I raised myself up until my mouth could reach her breasts, those mounds of flesh with their dark nipples standing firm and stiff in the night air. I licked gently around her aureoles, using my hands to reshape her breasts. I rolled my eyes up to see her head fall back, reveled in the sensation of her hands in my hair as she pushed herself harder against me.

When my teeth sucked the nipple of her left breast into my mouth, the moan she made was almost worth the wait of being with a woman. She was glorious, all dark and mysterious under the light of a full moon, the black curtain of her hair reaching past her knees with her head thrown back that way.

I sucked harder on her nipple as I let my hands work their way across the smooth satin of her back, down to the curves of her ass, down farther to caress the backs of her thighs. Shifting attention to her other breast, I felt her hands like feathers caress my face—the unscarred side of me, then the scarred, with no hesitation between the two.

When her breathing was fast and ragged with desire, I allowed myself the pleasure of her lips. Tongues stroked against each other as my body thrust

against hers, wildly and without thought. Her hands were upon me as she opened her mouth to allow me further entry. Touching everywhere, anywhere, that I could reach, I drank her in as if she was the very lifeblood that I needed to survive.

Kissing her was as magical as any ritual of the sun I had ever participated in. She was darkness and I was light, and I felt our powers mixing, swirling, rushing from her mouth to my own, then back again.

“Lie down with me, Lilith, and let me taste you.”

She smiled at me, and it was brighter, more brilliant, than any shield of light I had ever wrapped myself in. She lay upon the grass, in the circle I had made only hours earlier, and held her arms up to me in supplication.

Oh, to see the look of passion and lust on a woman’s face, to see no hesitation as I lowered myself between her spread legs. She wasn’t repulsed by me; in fact, she knew my intentions as I settled between her thighs, and with the first touch of my tongue upon her swollen clit, she screamed into the night.

It was glorious. She was glorious. I was hard with arousal, and the taste of her, bathed in moonlight without this former circle of power, was almost enough to cause me to spill my side onto the ground.

I licked her, massaged her, tasted her. For the first time in over nineteen years, my mouth was upon the most beautiful and sensitive parts of a woman, and it was my salvation.

“Please, Gareth, please.” I wasn’t sure she knew what she was asking for, but I did. I knew. There

were many things I had tried to forget over these many long years, but the needs of a woman in the throes of passion were not one of them.

I clasped the sensitive nub of her clit between my teeth, sucking it into my mouth. Her hips thrust up from the ground, and her nails bit painfully into my shoulders. She had drawn blood, I could feel the trails of it as it traversed my back, and I sucked harder, pushing my face harder against her, lifting her from the ground to press against my face.

When orgasm came, I felt her power spill over me in a wash of dark colors. She screamed my name, and it echoed through the clearing, drifted up into the night, and flew down the bluff to join with the ocean.

It was only when I rode the entire wave of her climax, when her hips finally stilled against my hands, that I slowly lowered her back to the ground.

Then I raised myself up until I could see into those brown eyes, the ones that held so much and told me everything I needed to know.

I could learn to love Lilith, and Lilith, I believe, could come to love me in return.

I felt my powers sizzling along my skin, a light shine to my body that was brighter even than the moon.

I wanted to bury myself within her, to spread her thighs wide and feel her legs wrap around my waist, then my shoulders, as I buried myself to the hilt into her waiting fire.

But as I watched her, as the glaze of her climax slowly fled from her eyes, I was more afraid than I

could ever remember being.

I knew what could happen, what very well *might* happen, if I plunged into her, headlong into the abyss of feelings and sensations that could cause my powers to explode outside the realm of my protective inner shields.

And I was frightened.

Lilith seemed to know, to understand. "It will be all right, Gareth." Her hands were gentle upon me—my chest, around my nipples, up my neck and across my face. "I know that which you fear."

And when I looked at her, I realized she did know. She knew what had happened with Moira, that when I had lost control, the building we were in had caught fire from my unrestrained powers. That I had escaped, and Moira had not. That I had killed, although inadvertently, the woman who meant more to me than life itself.

Tears filled my eyes, and I didn't try to hide them from her.

"Gareth," she said, and her voice was but a whisper upon the very air I breathed. "That was many years ago, when you had first come into your power. It was an accident, Gareth, and your control has grown since then." Her hands were so gentle as she pulled me towards her, as she bent her knees slightly until I was resting between them.

"What happened was an accident, Gareth, and will not happen again." She'd said that many times now, as if the repeating of it would make it so. As if hearing her say it, over and over again, would ease my guilt,

would take the burden on my soul and wipe it away as if it had never been there.

"How can you be so sure?" My voice was tortured, to match my soul. "I killed her, Lilith, as surely as if I had taken my blade and plunged it into her heart."

"No, Gareth, that is not true, and after almost twenty years of forced solitude, I am sure you know that. Look at me."

I did, looking at her with her hair spread on the ground like a silk sheet. With her breasts thrust to the night sky, with her legs apart, waiting for me to enter her. I looked, and I saw a woman who knew me—my fears, my wants, my needs. A woman who didn't fear me for what I looked like, or what I had done. A woman—not a succubus—who knew who and what I was and wanted me anyway.

"It was an accident, Gareth, plain and simple. Lord and Lady know that things in this world happen for a reason, and usually it is one we cannot understand. Losing Conroy almost destroyed me, just as the loss of Moira almost destroyed you."

Her hands gripped my shoulders as she shifted, slightly, until my cock rested at the opening of her body. I was help there, suspended, between the place I was and the place I wanted to be.

"But we were not destroyed," Lilith continued, her eyes bright as they stared into mine. "We live still, Gareth, and God and Goddess wish us to take advantage of that, to celebrate it, to hold onto it and never forget."

Her hips shifted the tiniest bit, and I slipped inside

her. I groaned, long and low, at the first feel of her wet and warmth surrounding me.

“We live, Sun Warlock, so that those whom we loved can continue to live through us.”

She was right. I didn’t need a succubus to relieve my pain—what I needed was a woman who understand the truth of me, the workings of my head and heart and soul. What I needed, more than anything, was companionship from someone who shared my truths and beliefs. A woman who would soothe me, and who I could soothe in return. A woman who could cure what ailed me, so that I could provide that same healing touch.

What I needed was exactly what the God and Goddess had given me. I needed Lilith. I had summoned someone to help me, and they had sent Lilith, Wiccan Priestess, but more than that, woman.

I thrust deeply inside of her and took her mouth at the same time. Soon there was nothing but the ground beneath us, the dark night sky above us, the faint sound of the crashing surf somewhere beyond the forest of trees.

There was quickened breathing, and grasping hands, and sharp intakes of ragged breath. There was sweat and movement and the writhing of bodies.

And finally, finally, with a rush of magic so strong it stole the breath totally from my body, there was release.

I cried her name as she cried mine, and the sounds mingled together in an offering to those who had brought us together.

Summoning Lilith, touching her, tasting her, bedding her, was like nothing I had ever experienced before. In this, there was magic. There was healing.

God and Goddess know better than I, and even Lilith, what they are doing. Tomorrow, on the night of Samhain, I shall thank them as never before for their wisdom.

Samhain

The celebration and ritual of Samhain is one of the most sacred. We honor those who have left us, we remember those who have given us life, and we celebrate the fruits that Lord and Lady have seen fit to give us.

The actual words of our ceremony aren't that different from the private ritual I held for myself last night. As I glanced at those around me, the members of my coven, all naked and shining with magic in the moonlight, awaiting the words I would say, my gaze was constantly drawn to Gareth.

Last night seemed almost like a dream. Our joining was freeing, for both of us. He was a complicated man; I'm sure that if you asked him, he'd say I was a complicated woman.

Sex with Gareth had no comparison. He was a generous lover, always making sure that his partners needs were met before his own. I could not remember the last time that I had given myself over so completely to another person—could not, in fact, remember a time when sexual release had felt so good.

I snuck a glance at him, across the bonfire that separated us, and found him looking straight at me. He smiled, a small twitch of his lips, as the light from the fire seemed to turn his skin translucent. He was beautiful with only the moon's light upon him; in the light of an actual fire, his beauty was increased a hundredfold. A living, breathing sun, staring at me with a different type of fire in his eyes.

We had made no real plans after our joining last night. He'd asked if he could see me again; I had said yes. No where, no when. But I knew, looking at him across that orb of light, that it would be tonight. When my words as Priestess were finished, when God and Goddess, Lord and Lady, had been properly celebrated, I would go to him again—or he would come to me.

Something in my heart loosened as I stared at him, as I prepared in my mind the words I would use to celebrate this most holy of nights. I felt Conroy like a ghost upon my soul, but this time it didn't hurt. The sharp ache of longing had turned to a dull edge of sadness.

This, I believe, is what Conroy had hoped to accomplish. For me to find someone who could share my pain, understand it, and ease it. Perhaps the Sun Warlock and I had more than one night awaiting us, after all.

I began the ceremony with Gareth's eyes still upon me, with the magic of his touch and the smell of his skin and the feel of his hands still lingering in my memory. And as I said the words that were not very

different from those uttered the night before, I thanked those who were listening, silently, for the gifts that they have given me.

"To the God & Goddess of the Year, the Watchtowers of the North and the elements of Earth, we call upon your wisdom, summon your energy and love to witness this celebration of this passing year, blessings to Samhain and union of spirit."

"To the God and Goddess of the Year, the Watchtowers of the East and the elements of Air, we call upon your wisdom and summon your energy for clear communications to spirit and divine knowledge and understanding."

"To the God and Goddess of the Year, the Watchtowers of the South and the elements of Fire, we call upon your wisdom and summon your energy for purification of mind/body/spirit and the harvest. We ask for your divine protection over all things that we bring forth for review, reassessment and resolution."

"To the God and Goddess of the Year, the Watchtowers of the West and the elements of Water, we call upon your wisdom and summon your energy for examination of our path and progress. For our personal introspection and our spiritual evolution."

"To the Lord of Samhain we offer our thanks and gratitude for this year. To the Lady of Samhain we give homage to your love and continual light. For the year of the harvest we honor the opportunities, the beauty, and the lessons you have provided. We honor the Lord and Lady, we honor our relatives in spirit, and we honor ourselves on this night, your night of Samhain."

My eyes never left his for long, during the entire

time of my offering. As I lit candles, I glanced at him. As I raised my hands heavenward and offered gifts to my God and Goddess, I felt his gaze upon my naked body.

Oh, yes, I would join with Gareth, Master of the Sun, Sun Warlock, again this night. And if Lord and Lady saw fit, for many nights to come.

Samhain is a time of new beginnings. With Conroy's help, and, I believe, even that of Moira, I believe that Gareth and I can begin anew.

We will never forget those we have loved and lost. My only hope, as I pass around cakes and ale for the coven's celebration, as my hand brushes against Gareth's own as I pass his portion of the feast to him, is that we will honor them with every joining.

As I met his eyes, as our magic flared, I knew that all things were possible.

About the Author

Alayne lives in the heart of Illinois, the state in which she was born and raised and has always resided. She has a wonderful, supportive husband, two eerily intelligent and rambunctious children, and the new-found ability to stay home and write full-time. Between doing book reviews, writing, and being a typical PTO mom, she hopes to keep writing long into the future.