

Changeling Press

# Seduced by Darkness



*Lacey Savage*

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## **Seduced By Darkness**

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*What's a girl to do when the only way to rescue her lover from the depths of Hell is to have him possess her other lover's body?*

Heidi Cole and Luke Howard may have survived an encounter with the Lord of the Underworld himself, but the price they had to pay for their freedom -- if you can call it that -- was much too high. Now, separated from Varin, the third member of their trio, they're on the run from an army of darkness intent on hunting them down and delivering them to their Master. Hell's spawns will stop at nothing to see Heidi and Luke reunited with their lover... in an everlasting nightmare.

With nothing but determination and fierce passion on their side, Luke and Heidi are driven not only to rescue Varin from his eternal prison in the depths of Hell, but also to outrun, outsmart and outlast the forces of evil.

And the only way that'll happen is if Luke makes the ultimate sacrifice and gives himself over to another man... *body* and soul.

Two men. One body. And damn, a girl can only take so much darkness before she succumbs to its seductive call...

## Chapter One

The syrupy glow of the golden sun sank down behind the horizon, tinting the skyline with pink, purple and red streaks. Heidi Cole squeezed her eyelids shut against the brilliant hues and pressed the heels of her palms against her brows.

"Shouldn't it be dark by now?" she grumbled, rubbing her tired eyes. "I swear it's been daylight for forty-eight hours straight."

"Really?" Luke Howard's husky voice rumbled through the interior of Heidi's Acura, deeper than the purring vibration of the engine. "It feels more like forty-seven to me, give or take a few minutes."

Heidi frowned. She knew he was teasing her. She only wished he didn't feel the need to do it so damn often. The lilting note of amusement in his tone never failed to make a shadow of a smile cross her lips, and she wanted to be angry, damn it.

Anger was a useful emotion. She could wrap herself in it and draw strength from the ire that streamed through her veins. She could even use it as a weapon. Or a shield - one that would at least give the illusion of protection.

And *fuck*, did they ever need protecting.

"You should get some rest," Luke suggested. "Sleep for a few hours."

Heidi rubbed the bridge of her nose. The headache that had begun building behind her temples an hour ago had expanded to full-blown agony. "I'm fine."

"Right. I forgot. You're superwoman."

"Super demon-kin, at any rate." She tried for a light tone to match his, but her comment came out sounding like a bitter, self-pitying snarl.

He shot her a look from beneath blond eyelashes long enough to scatter shadows over his high cheekbones. Golden hair fell in waves to his shoulders, where it rested across the tight stretch of cotton molding itself to his lean muscles.

"Hey." Luke rested his hand on her bare knee. His thumb nudged the hem of the skirt she'd bought from a wholesale department store on one of the brief stops she'd allowed them, inching it higher up her leg. "I've been around demons long enough to know one when I see one. You're not a demon."

She snorted, a decidedly un-ladylike sound. They'd had this conversation half a dozen times in the past forty-eight hours. His theory sounded as absurd now as it did when he'd first brought it up.

Fighting the urge to place her palm on top of his hand, Heidi forced her gaze outside the window, where Roanoke Mountain stretched its massive peak into the sky. The Acura curved around a bend, following the ridgeline, rendering a spectacular view of massive mountain rock on either side of the road.

They'd been driving almost continuously, pausing only for fuel, food and brief bathroom breaks. Cities had given way to towns, which in turn gave way to small country villages. Heidi had insisted they keep to the outskirts of central locations, knowing they'd be harder to track that way. The unfamiliar territory would give their pursuers pause. Slow them down a little. Just long enough to afford Heidi and Luke an opportunity to stop for the bare necessities before taking to the road again.

They couldn't afford to stretch the brief breaks into anything resembling true comfort. No matter how desperately she longed for a warm bath or a full night's rest, those luxuries would simply have to wait.

Besides, it wasn't as though Heidi could have slept anyway. Every time she closed her eyes and allowed herself to relax into a moment's worth of slumber, she *felt* the creatures that stalked them.

Demons, born of Hell's fiery chasms, pursued Heidi and Luke at their master's command. The Devil himself had imbued them with the fervid strength of the Underworld. The demons didn't need to stop for food. They didn't fall into oblivion to allow their bodies to recuperate after a long day's hunt.

They simply kept coming -- and coming -- until they caught their prey. And the closer they got, the hotter Heidi's skin blazed. The part of her that was half-demon

called to them, begging the beasts to catch her. Darkness closed in with every inch the demons gained on them. It taunted her, wrapped around her heart and squeezed, reminding her what it had felt like to be fully demonic, to have enough power in her little finger to level Roanoke Mountain with a flick of her wrist.

Or to destroy the two men she loved the most.

"Then what am I, Luke?" she whispered, so softly she wasn't sure he could even hear her. "I'm sure as hell not human anymore."

He traced a circle on her knee with his index finger, sending a tiny shiver up her spine. She ignored that, too, and clenched her hands into fists on either side of the passenger's seat.

"I told you, when we were..." He swallowed hard, and guilt snaked its way into her gut. He hated giving voice to the horrors he'd experienced in captivity.

She knew she shouldn't push him, but the dark, evil part of her urged her on. "In Hell."

Luke kept his gaze fixed on the windshield and guided the car effortlessly down the winding road, but she could see the tension tightening his shoulders. "Right." He cleared his throat and inched her skirt higher up her leg. His thumb trailed a path across the inside of her thigh, slow and deliberate. "I told you then you were unlike anyone I've ever met. I meant it. Not human, maybe. But not a demon, either. What you are doesn't make you evil. Not on its own."

"You're wrong," she murmured, tucking a stray curl behind her ear. "Varin's still there because --"

Luke's hand darted up in a lightning-fast move. He cupped her pussy, pressing the heel of his palm against her clit through her panties. A jolt of pure pleasure skimmed across her skin.

"Have you forgotten so quickly? Or do you choose not to remember what Varin did for you? For both of us?"

Heat emanated from Luke's palm, enveloping Heidi's cunt in waves of scorching energy. It seemed to penetrate the thin barrier of her panties and make its way inside

her, pushing, throbbing, insistent. She squirmed against the car seat as wetness dripped between her folds.

"I haven't --"

"Really?" Luke's fingers nudged her nether lips apart. He pressed down, rubbing her moisture against the fabric of her panties. The friction caused another shiver of sensation to slip and slide against the sensitive skin of her pussy. "Because you sure don't act like you remember. Varin sacrificed himself for us. He did what he did because he felt he had to. He's redeemed himself, though not in the way he'd thought it would happen."

Heidi's gaze darted to Luke's profile. Though he drove with one hand, the car remained steady on the deserted stretch of road. His lips had flattened into a thin line, and she suddenly realized how thoroughly exhausted he looked.

She didn't have to ask him what he meant. Varin and Luke had shared a cell in the depths of Hell. Two people didn't get much more intimate than that.

Luke had told her all he knew about Varin's past, which didn't amount to much. Still, it had been enough to help Heidi understand that Varin was instrumental in finding a way to bring souls across the divide between worlds... souls that shouldn't have been there.

The denizens of Hell called those souls the Forgotten. In every way that mattered, they truly were. Not dead, yet not alive once they crossed over, people who had been leading perfectly ordinary lives were snatched and brought to the Underworld to serve as Baal's personal prisoners for all of eternity. Once shrouded by the veils separating Hell from Earth, they were beyond reach. No one could help them. No one knew how.

At one time, Luke was one of the Forgotten and Heidi had been willing to risk everything to save him. All would have gone according to plan if a demon determined to redeem himself in the eyes of his master hadn't come along for the ride.



A demon who, in an unheard-of act of self-sacrifice, had shared his demonic powers with her. And who only two days earlier had condemned himself to an eternity of unimaginable torture to save Heidi and Luke from the same fate.

A demon she'd fallen in love with.

"I remember." Her voice sounded husky, different. She closed her eyes, picturing Varin's fiercely determined face and those bottomless black eyes that seemed to see right through her. She licked her suddenly dry lips. "I just wish I could have told him..."

Luke's thumb traced a slow, sensual line down her slit. Her pussy trembled under his attention, cream seeping from her core to drench the fabric of her panties. The scent of her arousal permeated the stale, re-circulated air in the car.

"He knows."

She blinked her eyes open, wanting to believe him but not quite daring to do so. While she'd been in Hell, she'd nearly burned both men alive with nothing more than a few muttered words. She'd come close to destroying them. *Too fucking close.*

No, there was no way Luke could convince her she wasn't a demon. She knew what kind of blood ran through her veins. What kind of thoughts chased sweet, delectable fantasies of lovemaking from her mind.

Yet Varin was a demon, too. If he had the kind of self-sacrifice he'd demonstrated within him, and her abilities had blossomed from his own, couldn't Luke be right?

Perhaps her demonic DNA alone didn't make her evil. Maybe there was something else -- something wicked within *her* alone -- that made her the way she was.

That thought sent a sudden, violent shiver down her spine. Her body jerked and trembled, thrusting her mound forward to grind against Luke's hand. The car swerved slightly, the tires squealing against the pavement.

Heidi's breathing quickened. "Watch the road, Luke."

"I'm great at multi-tasking." To prove it, he straightened the steering wheel and flicked the tip of his index finger across the sensitive hood of her clit.

Heidi bit back a moan. She narrowed her eyes, fixing him with an assessing stare. She'd been so focused on running from the demons that chased them, and so preoccupied with dark thoughts of Varin, that she hadn't allowed herself to indulge in more than a brief, relieved hug with Luke in an empty parking lot.

Now, having his hand on the most intimate part of her awakened sensations she'd replaced with adrenaline, fear, anger and despair. She had to admit, it felt good to let that brief distraction nudge her black musings toward something more pleasurable.

*Only for a little while. Luke needs this.*

Right. Like she didn't.

A smile tilted the corners of her mouth. It felt foreign, but she allowed it to stretch into a full-fledged naughty grin. "Oh yeah?" Her hand darted across the console, her wrist skimming his flesh before she slipped her fingers into his waistband and tugged the snap of his jeans open. "Prove it."

He wasn't nearly as good at concealing his emotions as she was. A low, guttural groan ripped from his throat. Encouraged, Heidi slid his zipper down, the sound of the metal teeth unfastening echoing impossibly loud in the small confines of the car.

Not to be outdone, Luke played with her swollen clit. He still hadn't nudged her panties out of the way, and the barrier between her flesh and his added another level of excitement to everything she felt.

A heartbeat later, she'd tugged his hard cock through the slit in his tight briefs. A drop of pre-cum shone brightly at the tip. Heidi traced the tiny opening with her thumb, massaging the creamy liquid into the rose-tipped skin of his cockhead.

"See? Car's fine. We're fine. Nothing to it."

Heidi heard the challenge in his voice, the hoarse breathlessness of his tone. She couldn't resist the chuckle that slid past her lips. Nor could she say no to a dare like that.

She pivoted slightly to turn toward him and wiggled her brows, even knowing he probably wouldn't be able to see the motion since his gaze remained focused on the road. "Oh yeah?"

"Yeah." He skimmed his fingers into the crease where her right leg met her groin, then circled the top of her mound to press lightly on her clit again. He hadn't even touched her needy entrance, but her pussy already spasmed and pulsed, practically begging to be filled.

"We'll see."

Before Luke could reply, Heidi unbuckled her seatbelt and pitched forward across his thighs. In a flash, she took the length of his cock into her mouth, sucking the stiff shaft, swirling her tongue across the underside of the solid length.

"Oh, fuck!"

The hand that had been embedded between Heidi's legs jerked up to grip her head. She felt the car swerve and had a brief image of the little Acura tumbling over the side of the ridge. Her heart thudded wildly as Luke regained his focus and straightened the wheels, but her mouth never stopped moving.

He wrapped his fingers in her hair, guiding her head ever so slightly with the slow pump of his fist. She gave in to his unspoken commands, letting her lips obey the rhythm he set.

The tip of his cock settled on the back of her tongue, hot and heavy. It seemed to throb and pulse with inner heat, and she wrapped her lips around the base of the turgid organ, sucking hard enough so her cheeks hollowed in.

Luke's thighs trembled. His hips moved in a small circle, matching the rhythm of her mouth on his sex. The steering wheel nudged the back of her neck, but she didn't care.

It wasn't until he slipped his fingers between her legs again -- and she realized he still hadn't let go of her hair -- that she noticed the car had come to a stop. The motor continued to vibrate, softer now, a mere purr that accompanied the slurping sounds of Heidi's mouth and Luke's heady groans.

She hummed, a steady vibration coming from the back of her throat. Luke cried out and tore her panties, shredding the material as he forced them away from her weeping cunt.

Two determined fingers found their way into her pussy. Luke's thighs quivered, his cock growing even harder as it throbbed against her tongue. His breath hitched and he pumped inside her with fierce thrusts.

His thumb skimmed across her clit. She gasped, but the sound was lost among the symphony of carnal pleasure streaming through the car. His shaft spasmed one last time, and then he was coming.

Heidi's inner walls squeezed his fingers. Intense pleasure thrummed in her clit as the taste of his cum assaulted her senses. She came, hard and fast, while the remnants of his orgasm emptied down her throat. Her body trembled, tensing and loosening with each wave of sheer ecstasy that poured across her nerve endings.

The world had gone black. She quivered, lost to everything but the taste and feel and smell of Luke, while Varin --

Agony pierced her soul. It gripped her heart, grabbed hold of every last shred of happiness that existed within her, and yanked hard.

Luke's cock slipped out of her mouth. Heidi's head reeled as she forced herself upright, her pussy still trembling with the aftershocks of her climax. Lightning flashed behind her eyes, exploding in her skull.

She gasped, her eyes widening as she stared at the now black skyline. Her fingers fumbled for the keys, the steering wheel, anything at all. The looming threat that had been like a rapidly expanding black hole in the back of her mind had turned into a gaping, cavernous entity threatening to engulf them.

The car rocked, though this time not because of anything going on *inside* it. Even the headlights spilling onto the black stretch of pavement wavered and shimmered from side to side.

"They're here." She wasn't sure if she whispered that terrifying announcement, or if the words had been a scream. "Drive!"

To his credit, Luke didn't even take the time to zip up. His foot slammed on the gas pedal and Heidi's body lurched forward as the Acura zipped away from the curb.

The entire planet seemed to shake and shift, tilting on its axis. Heidi's forehead whacked the glove compartment.

She came up again, dazed, but she'd barely managed to right herself in her seat when she glanced sideways at the steering wheel and caught sight of Luke's fingers flying across the black leather surface, struggling to steady the rapidly spinning wheel.

Her hand flew out and gripped Luke's arm. She couldn't tell if she was helping or hindering his efforts, but he made no move to dislodge her grip. She dared a glance at his profile and saw a muscle twitch in his jaw.

Behind them, the leaders of the armies of Hell amassed and moved forward, a connected wall of black heat that threatened to scorch everything in its path. Heidi didn't have to look through the rear window to know they were there. She *felt* them, and that was a thousand times worse.

"Fuck!" Luke's voice filled the car, hoarse with frustrated agony.

Heidi's nails dug into his flesh. If it hurt, he didn't show it.

The motor gave a grinding protest, jerking and heaving as Luke struggled to get the Acura back under control. The car seemed to grumble something metallic in response to Luke's last-ditch attempt to prove his mastery over the metal beast; then it halted, uncoiled and seesawed in a zig-zag pattern to teeter wildly on two wheels at the edge of the road.

With one last heaving groan, it pitched over the side of the ridge.

## Chapter Two

“Hang on!”

Heidi could barely make out Luke’s desperate bellow over the high-pitched groan of the motor’s rattle, the rocks scattering beneath the tires and the sound of her own fear slamming into her heart.

The car dove forward, free-falling twenty feet before finding purchase on a slab of outcropped rock. It hung there, momentarily suspended by its back tire before falling again, rushing head-first into darkness. And death.

*Holy Hell. We’re going to die.*

The thought zinged through Heidi’s mind almost faster than she could make sense of it, bringing with it a wave of fury. Their deaths would land them back in the Underworld, negating Varin’s sacrifice. Everything he’d done for them would be meaningless.

Something whacked the side of the car... or maybe the car impacted against it. Whatever *it* was, it felt large and solid, bending the metal passenger door inward until sharp metal splinters scratched Heidi’s arm.

The momentum of the jolt sent Heidi lurching forward with a bone-jarring thud. Her chest smacked the glove compartment, adding a deluge of distant pain to the overwhelming sensations already coursing through her body.

Someone screamed as the car toppled over, the force of the crash bashing Heidi’s head against the roof, which was now upside-down and entirely *wrong*.

The scream came again. It might have been from her.

Another blow from the side of the car sent it spinning. Heidi’s body pressed against something warm, suddenly hyperaware of the way it felt against her. *Skin. Hot, male flesh*. She recognized it. Drew strength from it.

She took a deep breath and held it. Conjuring an image of Luke's blue eyes and Varin's intense features, she clung on to that mental picture as the end of her life threatened to rush up and meet her.

And then, nothing.

The car stopped moving. Metal continued to creak slightly, as though needing to remind her they weren't out of danger yet.

Chaos wavered in Heidi's field of vision. She fought to make sense of her surroundings, but darkness had fallen and despite her recently acquired ability to see in the dark, she couldn't make out anything that made sense. The world felt completely inverted.

Her sense of touch, however, hadn't been affected by the pandemonium she'd been thrown into. So when Luke reached out and touched her arm, she let out a frantic, relieved cry. His fingers followed a path to her wrist, where they wrapped around her hand and tugged gently.

"Shhh... you're okay. We're okay."

She nodded dumbly, unsure whether to believe him. One arm lay twisted beneath her at an odd angle, caught between the two front seats. The Acura had come to a final stop on its right side.

Luke lay half on top of her, half draped over the steering wheel. Even through the shadows, her supernatural eyesight could make out the nasty bruise forming on his forehead. Blood ran in a tiny rivulet down the side of his neck to soak into the collar of his T-shirt. She hated to think about what other injuries could be hiding underneath those bargain-bin clothes.

"Watch out," Luke warned a moment before he wiggled his weight, shifted toward the partially shattered windshield and kicked with all his might.

Glass shards splattered over the dashboard, flying into Heidi's hair, peppering her face. She squeezed her eyes shut and held her breath until the last of the scattered fragments fell.

Luke tugged gently on her hand. "Come on, baby. We have to get out of here."

She nodded again, then caught herself and stumbled out after him. Fuck! When had she turned into such a weakling? She should have been taking charge of the situation, protecting him.

She rescued *him*. That was the way things worked in their relationship.

Only it never quite worked the way Heidi intended. Somehow things always got out of hand. She supposed that was to be expected when your main adversary was the Devil himself, but thinking of it in those terms seemed surreal, so she tried not to.

The ground beneath her feet felt solid enough when she finally rose to her full height, but her knees buckled, unable to hold her upright. Suddenly, she was enormously, absurdly grateful for Luke's strong arms as they wrapped around her and pulled her to his chest. With a sigh, she sank into him, letting herself be soothed by his touch, by his unexpected show of strength. Just for a moment.

He pushed her curls out of her eyes with the side of his broad palm. His lips grazed her forehead. "You all right?"

She wanted to tell him that she was... to prove she was as invulnerable as the demons chasing them, but no words came out. Instead, her throat constricted and the tough-girl sentiment turned into a choked sob.

*So much for bravery.*

She clutched fistfuls of his shirt in her hands, clenching her fingers so hard her knuckles hurt. "When did you become my protector?" she whispered.

When he didn't answer, she thought she might have pushed him too far. His good humor had seen them through harrowing experiences. Despite the horrors he'd witnessed, he'd never managed to completely rid himself of the incessant optimism that surrounded him. In the eerie quiet of the night, though, his stillness struck her as completely uncharacteristic.

Then his thumb stroked her jaw, and a bolt of lightning flashed through her veins. Arousal flooded her core and dripped along her folds into her panties, which were still bunched off to one side of her pussy.



"I had good role models," Luke murmured against her temple. His husky voice carried with it an intensity that made her go as motionless as he was. "Between you and Varin, how could I not learn what it means to fight? To protect those you love?"

He pulled back a fraction of an inch and pressed his forehead against hers. The steady rhythm of his heartbeat pounded against her chest, a comforting and familiar cadence against the backdrop of pursuit that wasn't far behind.

She knew they needed to keep moving. The shadows that had hunted them neared even now, tugging on the black tendrils enveloping her heart. The demonic part of her wanted to hiss and howl, to lead the armies of Hell straight to them.

With a sigh, she brushed her lips against his. "I really do love you. Madly."

He grinned, his teeth flashing white in the darkness. "I know."

She chuckled at the forced arrogance in his tone. She heard the tenderness beneath his words, the soft acknowledgement. "Oh yeah? Y'know what else, tough guy?"

Luke didn't seem to hear her. He'd begun kissing her eyelids, his palms flat against either side of her face. Warm lips traveled along one ridge of her brow, then the other. "Mmmm?"

"Your fly's undone."

He chuckled. "Good. One less thing to slow me down."

Shifting against her, he ground the thick ridge of his erection into her belly. She gasped, squirming as the heat of his cock penetrated the thin material of her shirt. He pressed in a little closer when she didn't think that was even possible, and the closeness of his solid muscles woke every nerve in her body.

"Those demons are going to slow us both down," she said, hating having to stop but knowing they had to. "Permanently."

A ragged sigh ripped from Luke's throat. He released her reluctantly, trailing his fingertips up and down the sides of her arms before backing away a few steps and zipping up.

Running a hand through his disheveled hair, Luke glanced around them. "Which way?"

She followed the direction of his gaze. The car had rolled to a stop at the bottom of a steep canyon. Few trees dotted the landscape, and those that had managed to sprout in this rocky region were small and offered no shelter.

Not that they could hide from the demons even if they'd had a place to do it. The creatures would catch their scent from miles away.

The moon had come out, a dot the size of a pinhead shining brightly in the midnight velvet, too far above their heads to do any good. Still, it cast enough light to allow Heidi's sight to amplify the few silver rays that trickled down to them.

"We go left. The canyon widens in that direction and there are footprints. Big ones. Some sort of animal, I think. If something that size can make its way down here and find a path back out, we can, too."

Luke peered in the direction she'd indicated, then shrugged. "If you say so."

She reached for his hand. "I do."

\* \* \*

They'd only been walking for about ten minutes when Luke felt Heidi stiffen at his side. She went from cautiously alert to panic-stricken in the span of one drawn-out breath.

"Demons?" he asked in a hushed tone, afraid his voice would boom off the sides of the mountain walls and echo into space.

She nodded tersely. He couldn't make out much more than the brief up and down movement of her head, a dark silhouette against a black background.

"Run," she commanded, tugging on his hand as she broke into a jog. "Follow me!"

As if he had a choice.

Sucking a stream of cold air between his teeth, he matched her speed, falling into step two paces behind her. It felt odd to run, to feel the burn of his limbs from exertion

rather than the whips and glowing hot pokers of Demon Guardians who loved nothing more than to prod him until he screamed.

Heidi's fingers wrapped tighter around his. She shifted toward the right almost imperceptibly, but he caught the slight change in direction just in time to avoid slamming nose-first into jagged rock.

As he concentrated on following her lead, he heard the *whoosh* of magical, demonic power as it formed behind him. He didn't need Heidi's abilities to figure out their pursuers had finally caught up to them. The evil, menacing feel of their mere presence seemed to cut through him, chilling him to the bone.

Heidi stumbled. He caught her before her knees smacked unforgiving ground by wrapping his arm around her waist and holding her a few inches from the rock bed.

"More." Her voice was all but lost in the turbulent whirling noises behind them. "Coming from the other direction."

Luke squinted, wishing he could see as well as she could. "Ahead of us?"

She nodded. "Can't you hear it?"

He tugged her to him, pulling her to her feet and pressing her back against his chest. The need to protect her was overwhelming. He'd always been broad-shouldered and muscular, but he knew as well as she did that there wasn't a chance in Hell he could stand toe to toe with a hundred demons.

Or even one demon, for that matter.

He *could* hear it now -- the guttural roar, different than the frothy hiss of evil behind them. "What is it?"

Heidi went perfectly still in his arms. He could feel her body stiffen, preparing to lunge, to break out of his arms and attack. A blue spark danced across her fingertips, splashing the darkness with a sparkly glint of raw magical energy.

She didn't have much. Their brief encounter in the car hadn't been enough to strengthen her. The sexual energy from which she drew her magical power had to be little more than a fizzle by now.

Still, he knew Heidi well enough to understand that she'd use every last drop of it if she thought it might save his life. Not *hers*. No. His Heidi would never be that self-centered. Not even if he shook her until her teeth rattled and demanded she put herself first for a change.

"It's getting closer."

The fear he heard in her voice seemed to hang in the air, taunting him with the knowledge that if he hadn't been right there with her, she'd probably have rushed head-first into the fray. It made him feel a little better to know she'd have done the same for Varin -- a little, but not much.

"Don't do anything stupid, okay?" he whispered against her hair.

The wind picked up her nervous laugh and scattered it through the canyon. "When have you known me to do anything stupid?"

Luke frowned, holding her closer. Tighter. "I mean it, Heidi. No heroics. Not this time."

"Why? If we're going to die anyway, what difference does it make what I --"

The deep, hypnotic rumble came close enough to drown out the last of Heidi's words. It filled the air with a metallic gargle and just as Luke recognized the sound for what it really was, a bright beam of light split the darkness in two just ten feet ahead.

Yanking Heidi to him, he pressed his back flat against the wall and waited for the chrome beast to pass. It didn't.

With a screech of tires against bedrock, the motorcycle came to a grinding halt in front of them. In the sudden flood of light, Luke could make out a woman's shapely form straddling the long leather seat. She seemed slightly familiar, though he couldn't make out her features beneath the flaming-red helmet she wore.

Darkness pressed in around them. Heat wafted from the rock walls, dislodging the calm night breeze that had been playing in Heidi's hair only moments earlier.

Evil was upon them. And it wasn't wearing a motorcycle helmet.

"Get on. Now!"

Luke fought the urge to roll his eyes. *Great*. Another woman who liked to give orders.

"Lillian?"

At Heidi's startled gasp, Luke took another look at the newcomer. He recognized her lithe form and the flowing mane of blonde hair falling in waves down her back. They'd only met once, briefly, after Heidi had pulled him out of Hell for the second time. One encounter in a blood-bathed clearing was enough to imprint the woman onto his permanent memory.

Lillian held out her hand. "Do you *want* them to drag you back there? They will, you know. They won't even kill you. Baal will have much more fun with you if they keep you alive."

Heidi shuddered visibly, though she tried to hide it behind a cough. Such a stubborn, impossible woman. And damn if he didn't love even those qualities in her.

She looked up at him, her eyes sparkling with the same fevered intensity as the tendrils of magic dancing across her knuckles. In that moment, he felt more responsible for her than ever.

Before she could protest, he grabbed her by the waist, picked her up and flung her across the back of Lillian's motorcycle.

"What the fu --"

"Shush, demon-child," he murmured soothingly in her ear as he climbed onto the leather seat and wrapped his arms around her waist. "Follow someone else's lead for a change."

She stopped protesting then, though whether because his words had had some kind of actual effect or because Lillian revved the engine and floored the motorcycle into a sudden backward lurch, he wasn't sure. By the time Lillian had the bike reversed and was zooming at top speed through the rapidly narrowing canyon, all conversation had come to a blissful stop.

They rode in silence, only the bellow of the beast between their legs making its presence known. He could feel the heat of the amassing demons as it scorched the brief

sliver of skin at the back of his neck, between his collar and his hair. It felt like a touch. A horrid, hate-filled caress.

He was grateful when Lillian pushed the motorcycle harder, jolting it forward, keeping them moving.

Heidi nestled between his spread thighs as though she belonged there. The heat of her rounded bottom seeped through her above-the-knee flowered skirt, but rather than being menacing and demonic, it stirred a different kind of sensation in his soul.

And in his groin.

The arm he'd wrapped around her midsection felt at home there. He angled his fingertips upward and grazed the underside of her breast. She trembled slightly and he cupped her left mound in his palm, squeezing the firm globe.

Her answering sigh reminded him of one important thing. They were alive. And he was going to do everything in his power to make sure they stayed that way.

Lillian drove the bike like a pro. She made turns by rote through the canyon, and soon they were on the road, zipping past slow-moving rigs and family-style mini-vans.

He didn't ask where they were going. To Heidi's credit, neither did she.

They rode for another hour or so before Lillian pulled off the highway and led them down a series of narrow streets. Luke wasn't sure where they were, but he didn't recognize any landmarks... not that there was much to recognize. Mountains in the distance. Trees and shrubs along the side of the road. Fewer and fewer houses that eventually diminished completely, giving way to more darkness.

The bike came to a stop for the second time just as abruptly as it had done previously. The tires squealed in protest, kicking up a wave of dust that got into Luke's mouth as he opened it to ask where they were.

Heidi did it for him. "Why here?"

"Hallowed ground," Lillian said, jumping off the motorcycle in a smooth glide. "They can't walk upon it."

Luke looked at the white structure in front of them. It seemed to glow in the silvery moonlight; its tall steeple marking it for what it was. A church. An old church by the looks of the crumbling walls and the broken front window.

"Then why can we?" Heidi asked as Lillian nudged the door open with her shoulder.

Lillian took off her helmet and threw it on one of the pews. "*We aren't demons.*"

Luke opened his mouth to say "I told you so" when Heidi shot him a look that could melt steel. He shrugged, but did nothing to hide the grin that curved his lips.

Inside, the place smelled musty, like rotting wood. There was nothing unpleasant about the scent, though -- not in comparison to the stench of Hell.

The aroma of smoke and melting wax flooded the air as Lillian lit half a dozen candles set out on the altar in front of the room. It had been stripped of any adornment, but the wood looked sturdy, even with the pools of wax that had sculpted themselves into something resembling art. Apparently, they weren't the first people to take shelter here since the church had been abandoned.

"Now," Lillian said, crossing her arms beneath her breasts and leaning against the altar to fix them with a piercing stare, "on to business."

"Why are you here, Lil?" Heidi asked. "Really?"

Lillian pursed her lips. "I thought I could let you go. I wanted to... you have no idea how much I wanted to wash my hands of all of this. But there are too many demons walking the streets. I've spent centuries slaughtering the ones who dared cross the threshold between worlds, and now you've practically invited them in."

"I --"

Lillian held up a hand. "No. I don't want to hear it. I don't care."

"Then what do you want?" Luke asked, taking a step closer to Heidi. He wanted to be near her, ready to protect her... if it came to that.

"I want the demon responsible for this mayhem to put a stop to it once and for all." Her eyes seemed to glow from the inside, giving her delicate features an ethereal

quality. "I want Varin. And you're going to help me bring him here to answer for his crimes."

*Varin didn't know you were miserable. He loved you.*

Hearing Luke utter those words to Lillian two days earlier had sent a battering ram of jealous fury straight into Heidi's gut. But whatever had been between Varin and Lillian was over centuries ago. She knew that.

Fighting back the jolt of possessive envy that shot through her veins at hearing Lillian state in no uncertain terms that she *wanted* Varin, Heidi narrowed her gaze. "You're offering to help us free him from Hell? Lil, that doesn't make sense. You made it clear you'd kill him if he ever stepped foot on this side of the barrier again."

"That was before I knew what you'd unleashed on the world." The tip of Lillian's tongue swept out to lick her bottom lip. At that moment, she looked scared. And vulnerable.

Odd, Heidi had never thought of Lillian as anything but intensely tough, a kick-ass and take-no-prisoners warrior who knew her life's purpose and carried it out with single-minded determination. A chill ran down Heidi's flesh, raising goose bumps in its wake. If Lillian was scared enough to want to bring Varin out of Hell, this was bad. Very, very bad.

"How many of them came through?" Heidi asked, surprised when she noticed her voice shaking. She couldn't help but wonder whether she looked as frightened as Lillian.

The woman shrugged, trying for a casual look that didn't fool anyone. "A dozen the first time. Almost twice that many the next time the portal opened. More since then."

Luke sucked in a deep breath between his teeth, letting out a little whistle. "We did that?"

"No." Heidi swallowed past the lump in her throat. "We couldn't have."



Lillian fixed her with an intense stare, but there was no anger in her brilliant blue eyes. Just pity, and a whole lot of sadness. "You opened a bridge between worlds. You broke the barrier -- broke all the rules that kept them at bay."

"You helped me," Heidi heard herself saying. She wasn't consciously forming the words. The whirlwind of blood roaring in her ears made it hard to think. "You and the Summoners allowed me to open the portal and go after my men."

Lillian paused for what felt like an eternity. One of the candles sizzled, sending up a thin stream of smoke. Otherwise, the church remained quiet. Deathly quiet.

"I did. I thought by helping you --" She blew out a deep breath and shook her head. "It doesn't matter. I need to put an end to this, but I can't do it alone. Varin is the one who trained the souleaters and Demon Guardians to breach the barrier between the worlds and kidnap Forgotten souls. Whatever he did, he can reverse."

Heidi didn't miss the uncertainty that fluttered over Lillian's ethereally beautiful features. The woman wasn't as sure as she sounded about her plan.

"And if he can't?" Heidi couldn't help asking. "What then?"

Lillian shrugged, pasting that same blank, casual look on her features. Seeing it made Heidi's blood run cold. "Then it's only a matter of time until we all become Baal's playthings. Every mortal soul on Earth."

An overwhelming, impending sense of doom seemed to suck all the air out of the church. Heidi's knees buckled and she reached for Luke, grateful when she realized he'd been reaching for her at the same time. He steadied her, and for the second time that night, she let him comfort her.

His unique, masculine scent filled her nostrils. She drew in a deep breath, drowning in it. He trailed his broad palm up and down her bare arm, pausing when the heel of his hand grazed the side of her breast. His body tensed, trembled. A flash of white-hot lust flooded her veins.

Heidi's eyelashes fluttered closed. For a moment, they were no longer two people who'd been through Hell -- literally -- and lived to tell about it. They were two lovers entwined in a sensual embrace.

She let herself fall into that fantasy for the span of a heartbeat, wondering what it would be like to live in a small, cozy house with two dogs and a white picket fence. She'd wake up every morning to the smell of freshly-brewed coffee. And two men in her bed.

Men who adored her. Who belonged with her. Her eyes snapped open. "What's your plan? Baal isn't going to let Varin go. And we certainly can't just march in there and take him by force. Every demon in the Underworld will be waiting for us if we try to cross that threshold again."

"I know. That's partly the reason we're here." She gestured around her to the whitewashed walls of the small church, which had taken on a grayish hue from all the smoke that must have filled the room over the years. "Hallowed ground will only get us so far. They might not be able to walk in here, but they can set fire to the church, or do any of a million other dreadful things to force us out."

The urge to fight slammed into Heidi like a long-forgotten memory, potently vivid. She remembered what it was like to use her magic to send the bastards back where they belonged. Only she couldn't take out an army of them. One at a time had been hard enough.

She forced herself to remain calm. "So what's the point of being here, then?"

Lillian pushed her fingers through her long, blonde hair. Even disheveled, it looked perfect. *She* looked perfect. Not like Heidi, who knew every mile of their harried journey showed in her face, her cheap clothes, her tangled curls.

Lillian raised a thinly-arched eyebrow. "Can you think of a better place to conduct an exorcism?"

Heidi stared at the woman blankly. Luke, thankfully, recovered faster than she did. "Nobody here's possessed. As far as we know, anyway."

"Right... Not yet."

Irritation gnawed at Heidi. "What exactly are you proposing?"

"A reverse exorcism. We snatch Varin right from under Baal's nose. With any luck, by the time he figures out we've got him, it'll be too late."

The strange plan was beginning to make an odd sort of sense in Heidi's frantic mind. Still, she knew it wouldn't work. "We don't have Varin's mortal body. He'd need to possess someone when we pulled him through."

Lillian cringed. "Yeah, I know. I thought maybe I could --"

"Absolutely not."

"I'll do it."

Heidi and Luke had spoken at the same time, but Luke's voice had boomed through the interior of the church, determined and confident. The women both turned to stare at Luke, who'd gone deathly still at Heidi's side.

"I'll do it," he repeated. "Hell, my body's his anyway." He chuckled hoarsely, but there was no mirth in the sound. "Varin can give you what you need to drive back the horde... through me."

## Chapter Three

"You're sure about this?" Heidi asked.

Luke looked up at her from the flat of his back. The wooden altar on which he lay felt hard and unwelcoming, and even though they'd moved the candles away and scraped off some of the wax, bits of it still stuck to his bruised skin.

Heidi's brows had drawn together in a frown. Behind her, another blue gaze assessed him from a distance, this one much colder, her eyes like carved chips of ice.

His attention flickered from one to the other, and he was once again struck by how different the two women were. Lillian's polished look was nothing like Heidi's natural beauty. Her sleek, blonde locks contrasted fiercely with Heidi's mane of wild red curls. Heidi's soft curves betrayed a womanly shape, while Lillian was pure, sleek muscle. A true warrior.

And yet, the women were similar, too. Heidi and Lillian shared the same steely determination, the stubborn streak, the independent, fierce drive that made them dangerous enemies to have and, he guessed knowing Heidi, tumultuously passionate in bed.

No wonder Varin had loved them both.

"Absolutely," Luke said.

Even though Heidi's smile was small and worried, it still managed to wash over him like sunshine. One day, he wanted to see that smile broaden into a carefree grin. He wanted to watch her toss her head back and laugh, really *laugh*, as though nothing in the world could harm her.

One day, he'd make that happen. And if letting a demon inhabit his body got him one step closer to his goal, so be it.

Only it wouldn't be any demon treating Luke's body like his own private playground. It would be Varin. His Varin.

No, he silently corrected himself. *Their* Varin. Heidi loved him as much as Luke did. She'd have switched places with Luke in a heartbeat if she could have, and she'd tried, but he wouldn't hear of it.

All of this was his fault. If he'd never made a deal with a demon for his own personal gain years ago, neither Heidi nor Varin would have been pulled into this mess. Whether he liked it or not, this was his burden to bear. And every time one of his lovers put themselves at risk for him, that burden intensified a hundred-fold.

The frown marring Heidi's milky-white skin deepened, etching deep furrows into her forehead. Luke reached up and smoothed out the wrinkles with his thumb. "Much better." When she scowled at him, he couldn't help but smile.

Her skin felt soft and warm under his fingertips. He slid his hand down to her neck, where he paused to feel the beat of her pulse against the hollow of her throat. Her breasts heaved with the force of her sigh and his gaze went to them, admiring the lush shape of the perky globes straining against her shirt.

Heidi trailed her fingertips over his bare thigh. The staggering force of the lust he felt at her touch nearly floored him. His erection strained against the tight briefs he wore, the only piece of clothing he'd kept on.

"I'm not going to lose you again, you hear?"

His grin broadened at the threat in her voice. "Don't worry, demon-child. I'm not going anywhere this time. Varin's coming to us."

She sighed again, the sound filled with resignation and defeat. "Through you. What am I going to do with both of you shackled to one body?"

Luke's hand darted behind her head, where he fisted his fingers in her hair and pulled her down to him until her mouth was a half inch away from his. "I'm sure Varin will have a few ideas."

Then, not waiting for her to reply, he kissed her. Or rather, she kissed him. With Heidi, it was often hard to tell.

Opening to one another instinctively for a fierce kiss that knocked the breath from Luke's lungs, they came together in an uncontrollable rush of passion, teeth knocking, tongues sweeping. He could still taste the faint, lingering flavor of his cum. Or perhaps she'd always tasted that way -- musk blending with the natural sweetness of her mouth.

The woman was pure sin incarnate. The way she moved, walked, talked --all of it conspired to make him lose his mind.

Her hand moved from his thigh to cup his erection. His cock twitched, jerking against the fabric pressed against the swollen flesh. The rhythm of his tongue's thrusts inside her mouth intensified, each stroke more electric and lust-charged than the last.

She trembled slightly, her fingers moving up and down over the length of his shaft. A bead of wetness had made its way to the tip of his cock, wetting the material of his briefs.

Although he couldn't see it, he knew the force of their mutual lust fed the sexual energy rapidly gathering in the air. When they'd generated enough of it, Lillian would use it, along with the inherent divine force that lingered in the church, to conduct the reverse exorcism.

In truth, he had no idea how this was supposed to work. As the only human of the trio, he often felt like he'd missed part of the conversation. Unable to understand the nuances of magic, he usually left the details up to Heidi and Varin. And now Lillian.

Heidi pulled back long enough to strip out of her shirt and toss her skirt and panties aside. Her breasts bobbed free, the small, dark nipples pebbling into stiff little peaks that made his mouth water.

"Come here." He hadn't meant the command to be harsh, but it came out throaty and demanding.

To his surprise, Heidi obeyed. She climbed on the altar, straddling his thighs. Her pussy lips parted to reveal the fleshy pink folds within, and the scent of her arousal flooded his nostrils.

He breathed deeply, imprinting her scent on his senses as she leaned over him, her tight nipples grazing his chest. Holding his gaze, she sank down and rubbed her wet heat over his struggling cock. The warmth seeping from her folds penetrated the barrier of the material he wore and managed to send a rush of desperate need deep into his balls.

He cupped her breasts in both hands, squeezing gently until a moan ripped from her throat. She bucked slightly, her thigh muscles quivering as she rubbed herself on his shaft.

"Varin always loved the way you took charge," Luke said, holding her gaze.

Heidi's long eyelashes fluttered as her eyes grew damp. "No way. He needed to be in control."

"Yeah," Luke agreed, pinching both her nipples at once. She arched her spine, scattering her red curls to cascade down her back and over her shoulders in silky waves. "He was certainly used to it until you came along. And then you showed him how much fun dominating a woman who stubbornly refused to give up control could be."

She sucked in a breath between clenched teeth. Fire burned in her eyes and he thought she'd argue with him, vehemently deny what he'd said. Instead, she only sighed and pressed her lips to his. After a sweet, soul-shattering kiss, she stared deep into his eyes and said, "Bring him back safely, all right?"

Luke's hands abandoned the full bounty of her breasts. He skimmed his fingertips over the length of her spine and pressed his index fingers into the double-dimple just above her buttocks as he gripped her hips. "Ride me, demon-child. Let Lillian do her magic. And I promise to bring your lover back to you, where he belongs."

A silvery streak slipped down Heidi's cheek. *Fuck*. A tear. A real tear. It damn near broke his heart to see it.

He raised his head and kissed it away, sweeping his tongue over the salty wetness as though he could draw the pain that created it into him, too.

Heidi's fingers danced over the tip of his shaft as she slid his briefs down just far enough to free his straining cock. The wetness that had seeped from the tiny slit at the tip rubbed against her bare thigh, slicking her skin.

He shuddered at the contact and lowered his palms. Cupping her ass, he parted her cheeks and slipped his fingers inside the soft valley. Gathering some of the cream from between her folds, he slipped it into the cleft of her ass and circled the tight anal entrance with his index finger.

She clutched his slick shaft with both hands, stroking his phallus up and down with strong, rhythmic motions. A groan lodged in Luke's throat. His hips bucked upward, his cock seeking contact with the moist, intimate part of her.

Lowering her head, Heidi covered his jaw and cheeks in soft kisses before finally returning her attention to his mouth. His tongue swept out, needing the taste of her as badly as he craved her pussy wrapped around his trembling rod.

With a growl that was lost inside her mouth, he seized her hips and brought her down on his cock, hard. She broke the connection of their lips and cried out, the sound resonating through the room with the same carnal wantonness he felt clawing at his own soul.

Trembling, she straightened her spine and straddled him, allowing him to glance down at the union of their bodies. His cock was embedded deep in her core, his light nest of pubic hair a sharp contrast to the red curls covering her mound.

The first lunge had been heavenly. Her cunt welcomed him home, squeezing around him, claiming his cock as though it had always belonged to her. In a way, he supposed it had. She was the only woman he'd ever been with who mattered.

The second and third thrusts were pure unhampered bliss. Rapture streamed over his nerve endings, setting his entire body aflame.

He held her tightly as she rode him, finding her own pace just as easily as he had. Her breasts bobbed up and down with every thrust, the rosy nipples peaking stiffly as a flush crept over the pale skin of her chest. Candlelight washed over her skin, setting her body aglow.



"You're so damned beautiful," Luke murmured, watching this woman who'd become his entire world fuck him as though her life depended on it.

And it really did, didn't it? The fate of the entire world could well depend on the way her pussy came down on his cock, harder and harder, squeezing, milking, demanding everything he had and more.

Her knees dug into his outer thighs and her fingernails scraped his arms. Small moans of pleasure escaped her throat. He drank them in ravenously, kissing her more fiercely with each heady groan.

She raised her hips until only the tip of his cock remained embedded in her sweet cunt, then slammed down against his groin hard enough to send an intense jolt of pleasure from his balls straight into his shaft. Then she did it again.

And again.

The fourth time she repeated that little move, Luke knew he couldn't last much longer. But he'd be damned if he came before she did.

Squeezing his eyes shut, he skimmed his fingertips over her stomach and found her clit with his thumb. The stiff nub hid under a delicate hood, which he raised up carefully before circling the sensitive flesh with the pad of his finger.

Heidi gasped at the contact and wiggled her hips in a circular motion. He welcomed her desire eagerly, rubbing her clit, burying his shaft to the hilt inside her.

When her pussy started spasming around his cock, Luke felt every nudge of her inner walls with redoubled force. She screamed his name, then Varin's, then both. He should have been jealous, he thought distantly as his own orgasm built and threatened to shatter, but he wasn't. He knew Heidi loved him, but her heart wasn't his alone.

Just like his wasn't only hers. They both loved Varin as much as they loved each other, and without him, they were two parts of a trio. United, but incomplete.

He reveled in her release with greedy pleasure, letting the feel of her pulsing cunt spread through him and unleash his own desire. The wave of ecstasy building within him reached its peak and exploded, making him howl with pent-up fury as the seed spurt from his cock.

A wave of erotic bliss traveled through his body, singeing his nerves, awakening every part of him -- from his raging cock to the tips of his fingers. Somewhere in the distance, Lillian's silvery voice chanted something that sounded all but incoherent to Luke's ears. The roar of the delight streaming through him drowned out her voice.

Lightning crackled, zinging over his exposed flesh. It burned for a moment as it flared brightly. His cock spurt the remainder of his cum, unleashing it deep inside Heidi's welcoming pussy.

And then blackness enveloped him, covering his eyes, making it impossible to see her. At first, he thought the candles had gone out. Then he realized he no longer felt Heidi's comforting weight on top of him, or the elastic of his briefs stretching around his thighs. His fingers no longer delved inside Heidi's swollen folds.

The world had dissolved into blackness, a darkness so complete it wrapped around his ribcage, squeezed and stole his breath.

Dread clogged Luke's throat. For a moment, he couldn't breathe. Then agony flared to life inside him, blossoming out over every inch of his body. The rapturous bliss he'd experienced earlier was gone, having been replaced by soul-numbing anguish.

Someone cried out. A familiar voice, one he recognized. He clung to it, trying to make sense of what had just happened.

*Luke?!*

The voice, tormented only moments earlier, now sounded panic-stricken. Worse yet, it seemed to come from inside his own head. His thoughts... yet not his.

*No. No, you can't be here.*

Luke fumbled in the dark, reaching nothing, grasping at thin air. He forced his mouth to move, but nothing came out.

*Oh, fuck. Luke. Heidi! What have you done?*

The pain that had flared to life within him seemed to expand, filling his lungs until his mind went as black as his surroundings.

And then, blissfully, he knew no more.

## Chapter Four

One moment Varin was strung up by his wrists ten feet above a cauldron filled with bubbling lava while Demon Guardians took intense pleasure in whipping his flesh with spiked leather, and the next he was flat on his back, looking up into worried blue eyes.

"You -- you're a dream." He reached up and trailed the back of his knuckles over the creamy white skin of Heidi's cheek. Her eyelashes fluttered closed for an instant, then shot open again, as though seeing him for the first time.

"Varin?" she whispered, her voice breaking as she uttered his name.

He nodded, the motion causing a wave of dizziness to wash over him. The pain was mostly gone, leaving faint traces in its wake like a permanent brand that would forever be a part of him. The agony he'd endured only moments earlier had been replaced by a needy, intense tingling... in his groin of all places.

Forcing himself to look past those blue eyes from his dreams, he took in the alabaster breasts tipped with darkened stiff nipples, the curvy lines of her hips and the pouting cleft of her sex... which at the moment was wrapped tightly around his rapidly-hardening cock.

He gasped and steadied himself by gripping her waist, his gaze darting everywhere at once. He didn't know where to look first. Blinking seemed out of the question. If he closed his eyes for even a fraction of a moment, she'd disappear, vanish into thin air as she always did when his fevered, tortured mind summoned her.

But no fantasy had ever felt as real as this.

"Varin?" she said again, her tone a little steadier this time. "It's really you, isn't it?"

His breath caught in his throat as he glanced up at her. He wet his dry lips with the tip of his tongue, fearing even to speak lest he break whatever spell he was trapped in.

Instead of answering, he thrust his hips upward, pumping inside her, once, twice, three times. Each stroke of her moist inner flesh against his raging cock sent need curling low in his stomach. His cock pulsed greedily, hardening further, and he could feel the walls of her pussy stretching to accommodate his growing girth.

His fingers strayed over her breasts, marveling at how *real* they felt in his hand. He cupped them both, letting the weight of the heavy globes fill his palms, and tweaked her nipples. She responded to his ministrations by rewarding him with a low groan, but her gaze never left his.

"Where's Luke?" she asked, tracing his right eyebrow with her fingertip as lightly as he'd touched her. Perhaps she, too, was afraid he'd vanish into thin air. "Is he with you?"

Luke's name brought Varin up short. He frowned, remembering... what, exactly?

Luke, yes, but... not Luke. At least, not entirely. He'd felt him though, had known he was close. For a brief moment, he'd heard his thoughts, had known what he'd intended --

"Fuck!" Varin's bellow rang out through the room, echoing off the walls. He jerked upward, wrapping his arms around Heidi and drawing her close to him as he raised himself to a sitting position. "An exorcism! Whose insane idea was that?"

He saw Lillian over Heidi's shoulder even before the woman opened her mouth to answer. For a moment, the entire universe seemed to stand still, suspended on the thread of a dream. It was as though the pieces of his past had come together to torment him, to make him pay for his mistakes.

"Mine."

Heidi pulled back a few inches to look into his eyes. "It was the only way we could think of to get you out of there." She touched her upper lip with the tip of her tongue, and he knew there was more she wasn't telling him.

The nausea returned with a vengeance. He closed his eyes, daring the room to stop spinning.

"Hallowed ground," Lillian said by way of explanation. "You're shielded from the worst of it by the mortal body you inhabit, but the longer you stay, the worse it's going to get."

*Mortal body? What the --*

He opened his eyes and lifted a hand to stare at his palm. Only it wasn't *his* palm. Broad and definitely masculine, with long, tapered fingers, the skin color was all wrong. Or rather, it was all *right*... for Luke.

Varin groaned and let his forehead fall against Heidi's shoulder. Her pussy twitched around him, gripping him tighter yet. Between the nausea and the raging lust pouring through his system, thoughts raced inside his mind at a million miles an hour. He tried to make sense of them, to think logically about all this, but the entire world seemed to be conspiring against him.

And if not the world, then at least the woman who'd once meant more to him than life itself... and one who still did.

Bile rose in his throat. This couldn't be happening. He grabbed Heidi's upper arms, his fingers digging into her flesh, and stopped himself just short of shaking her until her teeth rattled. "Why? I told you not to come for me. I *told* you!"

The corner of her mouth quirked upward. "When have I ever done what I'm told?"

A growl broke free from his throat. He had a million things he wanted to say to her -- to scream *at* her until she understood how dangerous a game she was playing. It was only a matter of time until Baal learned of what had happened. And then... then --

Emotions surged within him, tying his heart in knots. When he lunged for her mouth, it was with a desperation born of pure fear.

Fear for her. For Luke. And even, surprisingly enough, fear for Lillian.

Heidi's lips parted beneath him, pliant and yielding to his strength.

*When we fuck you,* he wanted to say in answer to her question. *Then you always do what you're told.*

He didn't say it, though. He didn't have to. She knew as well as he did that she delighted in being sexually dominated by the two men in her life, even though her wild, independent streak would never let her admit it. He nibbled on her lower lip, drawing it into his mouth and sucking on the tender flesh before swirling his tongue around hers.

She tasted exactly the same as he remembered, but there was a faintly musky undertone to the flavor of her mouth, one he recognized.

Cum. Luke's cum.

The knowledge only served to ignite the fire lighting a path through his veins. He wished he'd been here to see that. He would have loved to watch Heidi suck Luke's beautiful cock into the warm cavern of her sensual mouth. He could picture them, Luke's golden head thrown back in delirious pleasure, Heidi working his rod between her lips with such reverent care that it would be damn near impossible for Luke to resist spilling his seed inside her.

Varin's right hand strayed from her arm down her ribcage, over her belly, toward the hood of her clit. Drawing it up, he twisted his hips so his cock speared her deeply, embedding itself in her pulsing core.

He hoped Luke could feel this. Dimly aware of Luke's presence, like a lingering thought in the back of his mind that wasn't entirely his own, Varin hoped he could make Luke's sacrifice worth it.

He wanted to share Heidi with him the way they'd always done. Individually, the three of them were as different as could be, but together they brought out the best in one another. They... completed each other.

Funny, how that thought no longer seemed as absurd as it once had.

*Hold on to me, Luke. Feel her... through me.*

He didn't know whether what he'd tried to communicate to his lover would mean anything to the other man. As a Demon Guardian, Varin's job had been to bring back pure souls for the Lord of the Underworld to devour... not to possess mortal bodies.

He knew nothing about possession, or exorcisms. Besides, it had been centuries since he'd done anything but use magical energy to cast a few spells. His demon powers had all but atrophied in the bowels of Hell.

Heidi's thighs quivered. She forced herself to straighten and straddle him, but Varin would have none of it. He gripped her waist and set the rhythm for her, holding her tightly against him, her mound pressed down against his pubic bone.

With the index and middle fingers of his right hand, he caressed her clit while his cock pulsed and ground deep inside her. His mouth continued to devour hers, his tongue seeking, tasting, exploring.

He wanted to get a lifetime's worth of lovemaking in this one moment. Nothing else mattered. Not Baal's forces amassing outside -- that was inevitable. Not even Lillian watching from the corner of the room, though that knowledge sent a distinctly pleasurable jolt of satisfaction into his groin.

Varin's fingers moved faster. Heidi moaned softly against his mouth.

And then, abruptly, his free hand shot out of its own accord. He felt his fingers delve around Heidi's back to part her perfect ass and slip inside the crevice between them.

*Luke.*

The sensation was surreal, and oddly welcome. He let the other man take control and made no move to stop him when he swept some of Heidi's cream from between her folds and used it to circle her back entrance. As he pushed a finger inside her anus, she gasped and screwed her eyes shut, her breath coming in fast, uneven pants.

His -- their? -- cock throbbed with excitement. Heidi fucked him fiercely, bouncing up and down on his solid shaft, her body trembling with each flick of his fingers on her clit and in her ass. Her eyes remained closed and Varin's lips traced a

needy pattern over her cheeks, her eyelids, her brows. He wanted to kiss her everywhere at once.

Was she picturing Luke taking her from behind? Or was it Varin's real form she imagined pumping into her ass, stretching her to capacity, sliding inside her body in slow, rhythmic thrusts that matched the ones filling her cunt?

His cock swelled and spasmed as Heidi's orgasm erupted. Her release seemed to splash over him like a wave of erotic energy, summoning his own seed to spill from the engorged head of his cock. His need answered hers and as his rod moved inside the slick heat of her pussy, he came with a roar.

Heidi whimpered. From somewhere in the back of his mind, Varin thought he heard another groan, one he recognized. It was gone before he could be sure, and his own growl drowned out the sounds of his lovers' voices.

He lay panting, holding Heidi to him. He didn't know when he'd flung himself on his back, but there he was, with Heidi's body pressed tightly to his, his nose buried in her hair, the scent of sweat and sex permeating the air.

The volcanic fires that had been raging in his body dimmed slightly, though his cock refused to soften. Heidi wiggled slightly and rose until he slipped out of her, then lifted herself on outstretched palms to peer into his eyes.

"Do you feel better?"

Heidi's lips hadn't moved.

Varin glanced up past the red curls falling over her face and found himself peering up into shadowed blue eyes. He'd once lived for the sight of those eyes. That had been a long time ago... before Lillian had betrayed him and condemned him to an eternity of torture.

He'd always figured he'd deserved his fate. He'd even resigned himself to it, but that was before he'd met Heidi and Luke. Before he'd begun to believe in second chances.



Fingers stroked his skin, awakening a soft desire within him. Suddenly, he wanted nothing more than to hold Heidi and Luke on either side of his chest, nestled in the crooks of his arms where they belonged. Safe. Forever.

With a sigh, Varin pressed a kiss to Heidi's temple. "Much."

"Good. Because we don't have much time."

He peered upward, and for the first time saw the worry etched on Lillian's brow for what it was. "You have a plan?"

"That depends on you. The barrier that should have kept the mortal realm separate from the Underworld has been breached. Demons are pouring through like never before. There's nothing to stop them." She licked her lips nervously, then continued, "You did something when you learned of a way to bring souls to the other side before their time. We need you to do it again. Only... reverse it this time. Make it so Hell's armies will stay in the Underworld, while mortal souls remain here until it's time to cross over. The way it should be."

A rough chuckle broke from his throat. "You give me too much credit."

Heidi sighed. Her eyelashes fluttered closed for a moment, sending long shadows over her cheeks as candlelight scattered its wavering glow across her skin. "I knew this wouldn't work."

His heart constricted in his chest and a knot tightened in his gut. "I'm sorry," he whispered. "Learning of a way to bring souls through the veil was more of a fluke." His gaze slid to Lillian. "You were the first, you know. I don't think I could have done that with anyone else. There was something about you..."

Suddenly needing to stand, he gently pushed Heidi away. She didn't fight him, but slid to the edge of the altar and crossed her legs unselfconsciously under her. The gesture spread her pussy lips wide open, revealing the pink swollen flesh that hid the secrets of her body. A drop of cum slipped from her folds to form a tiny, pearly-white puddle between her thighs. She ignored it, focusing all her attention on him instead.

Varin paced from one end of the room to the other, fighting the renewed nausea that swirled in his stomach and threatened to rise up into his throat.

"You were sleeping," he said softly, remembering how he'd watched Lillian for hours before finally attempting what had never been done before. "I knew you were unlike anyone I'd ever come across. You were... innocent, Lil. Beautiful. I had to have you."

Guilt washed over him so abruptly it nearly sent him staggering. He reached out to grab the back of a pew and steady himself before continuing. "I had no idea what I'd planned would even work. I only knew I had to try. I remember the exact moment I decided to do it. You'd been dreaming... I sat at the edge of your bed and watched, enthralled as your hand slipped between your thighs and you brought yourself to climax under the covers. I couldn't see anything," he added quickly, not meeting either woman's gaze. "But the scent of sex and the energy you'd created was enough to let me open a portal from this side of the realm."

Lillian clenched her hands into tight fists at her sides. Varin's gaze slid over her tightly-corded body, noticing that although her face remained impassive, her arms shook. With remembered rage? Renewed anger? He couldn't tell.

"I recall opening my eyes." She took a deep breath and blew it out between pursed lips. "You were there, standing over me. Then there was a flash of blue magic and --" Her eyes widened and her hand flew to her mouth. "You --you used me. I was a conduit."

He nodded, a fresh surge of shame washing over him. "No other Demon Guardian had ever considered transferring his power into a human and letting her do the work. I'd watched you gather up more sexual energy in a few minutes than I'd seen others summon in hours. I knew you could handle it."

A rough wind rattled the windowpanes of the church. The few windows that hadn't been broken shook, and a gust of scorching heat drifted inside through the gaps. The horde was close. Too close. Even now, they probably stood outside the perimeter of the property, figuring out how best to get their prey out without putting themselves at risk.

What had begun as nausea had intensified, blossoming into something bordering torment. He'd always thought the Hallowed Ground myth had been just that. A story made up by humans to keep demons away from their worship locales. So much for that.

"So then you didn't do anything? Nothing that could help us now?" Heidi said, glancing at him through lowered lashes. Her lips were pursed, and wrinkles had appeared over the bridge of her nose. Was that jealousy he saw on her beautiful features?

The mere thought of it should have been absurd, but he understood how she felt. Crossing the distance to her in three long strides, he lifted her off the altar until she stood before him and tucked an ever-escaping stray curl behind her ear.

"Listen to me. I did the only thing I knew how. I obeyed my Master. I can spend the rest of eternity repenting, but that won't help me. Or --" The word caught in his throat, but he pushed past it and managed to get it out anyway. She had to understand how dangerous this was. "Or you."

Before she could reply, he cradled her head against his palm and pressed her body to his. After a moment's hesitation, she sank against him, her breasts molding to his -- to *Luke's* -- much larger frame.

"I need to go." He couldn't believe he'd uttered the words, but there they were. Looking at Lillian, he implored her with his gaze. "You have to send me back before Baal realizes I'm gone. Let Luke have his body, then get as far away from here as you can."

The hitch in Heidi's voice sounded like a sob. It damn near broke his heart to hear it. "Where would we go? They'll find us."

*Fuck!* How could he feel as though he was protecting her when he held her like this in his arms, all the while knowing he was abandoning her and sending her right back out into danger? All of this -- everything they'd been through -- had been for naught.

Baal would catch Heidi and Luke, and they'd live out the rest of eternity together, all right. Them and Varin and Baal. One big happy family.

She felt so small and vulnerable pressed against him. Her body awakened shivers of raw sensation that danced up and down his spine. She was so damn stubborn, his Heidi. Just like Lillian before her.

Just like Luke.

It seemed he was damned to fall in love with people who never did what he wanted them to do.

"I'll do what I can to keep you safe," Varin promised between gritted teeth, knowing all his efforts on the other side would amount to absolutely nothing. He couldn't stop Baal. No one could. "Just... send me back."

Lillian held his gaze with a steely glare of her own. She ran a hand through her blonde locks, and Varin watched as they slithered through her fingers to fall in silky waves over her shoulders. He remembered how innocent she'd been once. How pure.

He'd taken that from her the moment he'd brought her into Hell, and he'd gladly pay for that mistake... and for the thousands of souls that followed. After he'd returned to the Underworld with his prize, he'd delighted in sharing his discovery with his fellow brethren. It had taken them some time to master his technique, but once they had, there was no stopping them.

"Lie on the altar," Lillian commanded, sarcasm dripping from her voice. "You'll be home in no time."

Varin licked his suddenly dry lips. "Thank you." The words didn't come easily. They never had.

Releasing Heidi and stepping away from her was the most difficult thing Varin had done in his entire existence. He didn't know how he'd managed to rip himself from the sensual feel of her lush curves, but the next thing he knew he was gripping the edge of the altar, trying to keep the wave of dizziness from knocking him flat on his back on the floor instead.

The interior of the church only seemed to spin faster when he finally managed to lie down on the altar. Balling his hands into fists at his sides, he waited for the inevitable darkness to claim him and for the pain to spike through his flesh.

Lillian began to chant, her silvery inflection high and sure. But it was Heidi's voice that sent a surge of adrenaline through his veins.

"Wait!" she cried out, her excitement carrying clearly through the air. She rushed to his side, her fingers digging into his upper thigh. Her touch sent fire streaming into his groin, and his cock twitched at the contact. "I think I have an idea."

## Chapter Five

Heidi chewed on her bottom lip. Her skin prickled with restless anxiety as the temperature in the old church rose to barely-tolerable levels. She didn't need the heat to remind her of what was out there. The evil menace slipped into her soul and taunted her with whispered promises of power and evil deeds.

The more demons that assembled outside the church doors, the harder resisting their call became. Her head throbbed mercilessly, making it hard to focus. There were moments -- *brief* moments, thankfully -- when she wondered why she even bothered to fight Baal. It would be so much easier to give in and let the Lord of the Underworld take care of her.

He might, too. If she aligned herself with him, he'd hand her the world on a platter. Or string her by the soles of her feet and dip her head in molten lava. With Baal, it would probably depend on his mood at the time.

Thankfully, she had a way to anchor her sanity. And he lay propped up on one elbow on the altar, staring at her as though she'd lost her mind.

"Well?" she asked when the silence had stretched on for far too long. "What do you think?"

Both Varin and Lillian simply blinked, peering in her direction like she'd struck them speechless by giving voice to her thoughts.

Sighing, Heidi plopped her butt down on a decaying pew. The old wood groaned, threatening to topple over, but held. "I know what I'm talking about. I've studied magic. If Varin could filter his potent demonic energy through a human in order to thin the veil between worlds, then he could do it again to reinforce it. Right?"

Nothing. For a moment, she considered getting up and doing a naked cartwheel. It wouldn't accomplish anything, but it might get some sort of reaction out of them.

"Uhh... yeah, theoretically," Varin said at last, choosing his words carefully. "But I can't use my powers from where I am. Baal stripped them from me when he condemned me to an eternity of torture, remember?"

"Oh." What little hope she'd gathered seemed to drain out of her, leaving her deflated. She propped her chin on her outstretched hand. "I didn't think of that."

He cleared his throat, looking run-down, wary and very much like Varin. Even though he still inhabited Luke's body, there was something about the way he carried himself, a certain innate strength that told her exactly who she was dealing with. And then there were the eyes...

She'd known the moment Luke's soul had moved aside to make room for Varin's. The slate-gray orbs had grown shadowed almost instantly, deepening to a midnight-black even darker than the pupils in the center of Luke's eyes.

A woman could get lost in eyes like those. No wonder she found it hard to think. Between the constant rage clawing at her black, demonic heart and Varin's unnerving, sensual gaze, she was amazed she could still form coherent sentences.

On the other side of the altar, Lillian looked like she had no problem at all keeping her composure. Despite the fact that Varin had made her into a demon-kin as well, and she had to be feeling the pull of the creatures outside, she looked calm and unperturbed, not a perfect blonde hair out of place.

*Bitch.*

Heidi squeezed her eyelids shut. She hadn't meant that. Not really.

Had she?

Damn, it was impossible to know what part of her thoughts were her own, and how much of them came from the dark genes traveling through her system, tainting her blood. If she had this much difficulty keeping her composure, she couldn't even begin to understand how Varin could stand it. On a full-fledged demon, the seductive pull of darkness had to be a thousand times worse.

"I'm sorry," Varin said, stretching out his hand in a gesture of helpless surrender. "I really wish I could help. Unfortunately, you need demon magic to affect

the barrier between the Underworld and the mortal realm and I can't do anything in my current state."

Heidi's head shot up. She met Lillian's gaze, who looked as stunned as she felt.

"Do you mean to say that *any* demonic energy would work?" Heidi asked, trying to keep a sudden jolt of enthusiasm under control. "Not necessarily yours?"

Varin looked thoughtful for a moment, then nodded. "I think so. It's the same kind of energy the Demon Guardians use when they claim a soul and bring it back through the veil."

He must have seen something in her face that alarmed him, because he shot upright. "Wait. If you're thinking about convincing one of *them* --" He pointed to the front door, presumably indicating the skulking mass of dark beasts out there.

"We're not." Lillian took a deep breath, shaking her head. "We're thinking that two half-demons make a whole."

"Like two wrongs make a right," Heidi agreed.

Understanding dawned on Varin's -- *Luke's* -- face. Goddess, would she ever be able to look at Luke again without seeing Varin stare up at her from the depths of those eyes?

After a moment's hesitation, the corners of his lips nudged up into a reluctant half-smile. It was more than she'd thought she'd see. Suddenly, the feeble hope of a remote possibility turned into actual optimism and knocked the air from her lungs.

"So... we'll do this?" she asked, her voice quivering with barely contained excitement.

She hadn't realized how much she'd needed this. A goal. A real purpose, even one that had a snowball's chance in Hell of succeeding. A microscopic chance was still a chance, and she'd risk her life for the possibility of success.

"Not without Luke's permission." Varin's tone left no room for debate, even if she'd been inclined to argue.

She wasn't.



As the only remaining human of all of them, Luke would have to risk his body... Hell, maybe even his soul for the remote chance this might work. She wouldn't make a move without his permission.

"Can you bring him back?" Heidi asked Lillian. "We'll ask him."

"I think I can do better than that," Lillian said. Her brows drew down over the bridge of her delicate upturned nose. "When I pulled Varin through, I felt Luke, dimly, in the background. He slipped out of the way, allowing Varin to surface. I think I can keep them both around." She fixed Heidi with a stubborn glare. "But not for long. I don't know what this will do to either of them if we prolong it."

Heidi nodded. Time was working against them in more ways than one. The temperature in the room had to be a hundred degrees. She was completely nude, yet sweat still trickled down her spine and between her breasts. Luke's damp hair stuck to his forehead, and damn it, Lillian should have started to look at least a little wilted around the edges by now.

She didn't. In fact, she hadn't as much as bothered to wipe a drop of sweat from her temples, yet she looked radiant. Ravishing, even.

*Bitch, bitch, bitch.*

Pressing the heels of her palms against her brow bone, Heidi grimaced. "Do it."

\* \* \*

"Yes."

The word was out of Luke's mouth even before he felt himself fully return to the world of the living. Whatever had occurred when Varin made love to Heidi had transcended the boundaries of space and time... and, he assumed, lost souls.

The sensation of being united with his mate had filled the darkness that surrounded him. It sent a shiver of longing through his incorporeal body, one that was impossible to ignore.

He forced himself to listen, to feel, to focus on what was happening outside his claustrophobic little world. If not for Heidi's soft moans and the way she milked Varin's

release out of Luke's body, he thought perhaps his soul might have never found its way back.

He'd never know, of course, but he figured this was just one more item scrawled on an endless list of reasons to be grateful to Heidi and Varin.

"You're sure?" Lillian asked. "You understand what we're asking?"

He opened his mouth to reply, but Heidi was quicker. "There are no guarantees. I don't know what will happen when two half-demons try to channel energy through you."

"But you know as well as I do what will happen if you don't," he pointed out reasonably.

She seemed to think about that for a moment, her head tilted at an odd angle as she regarded him. Her gaze traveled over his chest, his throat, then focused on his eyes as though trying to figure out if it was really him in there.

*As if I'd ever risk your life on your behalf.*

Luke grinned at Varin's indignant tone. His voice had resonated clearly through Luke's mind, bringing with it that odd feeling of a thought that was his... yet wasn't.

Unnerving, to say the least. Yet comforting, too, in an odd way... knowing he wasn't alone.

Heidi had drifted toward the altar while she'd been fixated on his eyes, so when she came near enough, he reached out and closed his fingers around her wrist, pulling her to him. She gave a little grunt when her hip nudged the side of the altar.

Luke's hands roamed over the length of her body. God, he couldn't get enough of her. His fingertips skimmed her skin, dipping into the perfect valleys and climbing the lush mounds of perfect, feminine curves.

"So what happens now?" he asked, drawing Heidi's head down until her lips were a mere inch away from his.

"Now the three of you do what you do best," Lillian said. "You give me more energy."

Outside, the hot waft of hell-spawned air seemed to pick up a notch. It traveled on the wind, rattling the stained glass windows in their panes and making the temperature rise by a few more degrees.

"And hurry," Lillian added unnecessarily. "Time's running out."

He'd expected Heidi to make some wry remark about demons being in a hurry to finish the job, but instead she simply bent down the remainder of the way, and kissed him.

Luke opened his lips under hers. His palms trailed up the side of her ribcage, cupping her full breasts, groaning into her mouth at the feel of the lush mounds spilling out of his palms.

Without guidance, Heidi's hands traveled to the juncture of his thighs. She grabbed his erect cock -- *has it been hard all this time?* -- and wrapped her fingers around the thick girth, stroking him.

Up, down. Up, down.

His hips pumped slightly with each completion of her strokes, thrusting into her fist. She squeezed him, summoning another tortured groan from the back of his throat.

"What part of hurry don't you understand? I mean, get busy! Now!"

Luke would have laughed if he hadn't known Lillian's absurd order came from a desire to keep them safe. To end this threat once and for all.

*Why didn't I ever notice how bossy she was?*

Luke's eyelids snapped open. He felt his gaze shift from Heidi to Lillian, though he knew he hadn't consciously made the decision to look at the other woman.

*Wouldn't you have just liked her more if you had? I mean, look at who you ultimately fell in love with.*

Varin snorted, as close to a laugh as Luke was likely to get out of him. Grinning in response, Luke forced his gaze back to Heidi's beautiful face.

Heidi stroked his balls, tracing her fingers over the soft skin at the base of his scrotum. His sac tightened, drawing up close to his shaft.

*Oh. Oh, that's good. Tell her to do that again.*

Luke shook his head, leaving a stream of kisses along Heidi's cheek in the process. "Varin wants you to cup my balls again."

She raised an eyebrow, her blue eyes sparkling with mischief. "Varin wants that, huh?"

Luke lifted a shoulder in response. "Demons. Who can understand their weird needs?"

Heidi rolled her eyes, but not before he caught a shadow of a smile breaking over her features. He reveled in it, closing his eyes to capture that sight behind his eyelids and imprint it there forever.

Tangling his fingers in Heidi's hair, he held his breath while she climbed up on the altar and positioned herself between his spread legs. When her lips made contact with his sac, he nearly jumped out of his skin.

No... *Varin* nearly jumped out of Luke's skin. His cock hardened to impossible proportions and he thrust up and down, needing the friction of Heidi's fist jerking his desperate rod.

A shudder broke out over Luke's flesh, causing him to tremble with desire. As though to torture them both even further, Heidi sucked one tight ball into her mouth and held it on her tongue, toying with it gently while she licked small, circular patterns over the underside of the puckered skin.

"Good. More." Lillian again. The woman was relentless.

Luke's eyes popped open. "This will go faster if you join us."

*Whoa. No. We didn't talk about this. She... she can't!*

Ignoring Varin's protests was easier than ignoring Heidi's, who saw fit to express her displeasure at the idea by pressing down with her teeth on his very sensitive family jewel.

Fisting his hand in her hair, Luke pulled her head up. She released his scrotum and glanced at him questioningly. "You're sure?" she asked for the second time since he'd repossessed his own body. Except this time, Luke had a feeling she was no longer addressing him.

No. Varin's growl seemed to rumble through Luke's chest until he was sure Heidi must have heard him, too.

"It was Varin's idea," Luke said, trying hard to contain the mirth that suddenly erupted in his chest. Or maybe that was Varin's way of punching him from the inside.

Hard to tell.

Lillian's tongue swept out to moisten her lips. "If... if you're sure."

After a moment's hesitation, Heidi sighed. "Yeah. Luke's right about one thing... we'll gather the energy we need much faster this way."

That settled, Luke didn't know where to look first. His gaze darted from the inviting sway of Heidi's ass as she bent over him and swept her tongue quickly along the head of his cock, to Lillian's body, which she slowly revealed to him, strip by tantalizing strip.

"Baby," Luke whispered to Heidi as Lillian undressed, "She's got nothing on you."

He meant it, too. Where Heidi's body was full of lush curves that begged him to sink his teeth into the tender flesh, Lillian was pure, sleek muscle. Her breasts were small and high. They looked firm, with large puffy nipples that seemed at odds with the size of the mounds. Flat abs gave way to long, lean legs. A nest of golden hair sprung out from between her thighs.

Heidi glanced up, her brows furrowed in a skeptical look.

"Trust me," he whispered. "You're the only one I want."

When a sharp pain slammed into his side, Luke couldn't mistake the hard poke in his ribs for anything other than what it was. "We want," he corrected quickly.

Lillian neared, hesitantly at first. He marveled at that. For such a strong, independent woman, she looked lost and uncertain as she made her way toward the altar.

Heidi glanced sideways, her gaze skimming Lillian's body and coming to rest on the other woman's face. With a sigh, she scooted over and gestured to the spot beside her. "Climb up."

For a moment, Luke thought Lillian might argue, but then she did as she was told. As she fidgeted, trying to find a comfortable position, Heidi surprised him yet again by spinning around rapidly and straddling his face, then bending over the length of his torso until her mouth was even with his groin once more, and the pink, flushed folds of her pussy pressed up against his nose.

He inhaled deeply, and felt Varin shudder at the scent of her.

*Oh yeah. This is more like it. Lick her... Damn it, Luke. Lick that succulent cunt already! Now who's being bossy?*

Luke didn't wait for a reply before doing exactly as he was told. His tongue swept out, parting Heidi's luscious nether lips. He gathered her cream on his tongue, tasting his cum in the intoxicating blend of moisture.

Heidi taunted him by kissing the head of his cock. She sucked on the tiny slit carefully, drawing out the little drop of wetness that had already begun to form at the tip.

Luke groaned, his hips quivering with pent-up need. From what little he'd learned about sex magic, the trick was all in the foreplay. The more energy that gathered during this stage, the more potent the result when it was finally used.

He tugged at a silky strip of flesh, sucking Heidi's outer labia into his mouth and nibbling on it slowly until her thighs tensed and trembled. She retaliated by closing her hand around his balls and squeezing, just hard enough to send a jolt of ecstasy deep into his groin.

And then, just when he thought he couldn't take any more pleasure, a second tongue joined in the fray.

From somewhere deep in the back of his mind, Varin groaned. For a moment, a rush of memories flooded Luke's thoughts. Memories that weren't his own, yet played out as though he'd lived them himself.

Images assaulted his mind. He saw Lillian's parted thighs, the matted, soaked-through golden curls surrounding her glistening pussy, and Varin's cock delving deep

within to pound incessantly at her core. He felt it, then, too... Varin's desperate need to please her. To keep her. To make her happy.

Suddenly, as abruptly as it had begun, the movie reel in his brain fizzled and dimmed. Another one replaced it, this one even more vivid because he could fill in the blanks Varin left out.

*Heidi.* On the altar in the dungeon room, straddling Luke and bending forward to offer her ass to Varin. Then again, in Baal's playroom, on her knees as Luke and Varin pounded into both inviting entrances of her body. Her red curls shimmering down her back as she tossed her head back and cried out with the force of her release.

He could have lost himself in those thoughts, but he wanted the real thing, and he had her. Right here. Right now.

Pressing his nose into her fragrant pussy, he licked a path up and down her slit, from the top of her clit to the inviting circle of her tight little back channel. She squirmed, but he was relentless, licking, nibbling, caressing.

The tongues licking him gave each other wide berth, but the coverage they achieved felt incredible. His cock felt worshipped, slathered in moist heat. Heidi's fingers toyed with his sac, driving him to distraction.

"God, Heidi," he murmured, his voice hoarse. "Suck my cock into that beautiful mouth of yours."

Without protest, Heidi did as she was told. Her lips traveled down his length, enveloping him in raw heat that scorched him to a more intense degree than any fetid demon breath could.

He'd expected Lillian to back off, but she didn't. Instead, her mouth traveled to his tight sac, and she took over for Heidi's skilled fingers.

As Heidi welcomed his entire cock into her mouth, Luke kissed, nuzzled and sucked her pussy. Spreading her nether lips with the thumb and index finger of his right hand, he slipped two fingers of his left inside her passage. They slid in easily, encountering little resistance since she'd been so thoroughly lubricated.

Heidi moaned around his sex. The sound of her pleasure might have been muffled, but it was no less potent or erotic to his ears. Encouraged, Luke allowed his tongue to drift up to her clit, then nudged the tight bud a fraction of an inch while thrusting a third finger alongside the other two deep into her cunt.

She heaved and shuddered, bobbing up and down on long, repeated mouthfuls of cock even as her release broke within her. Luke stilled his fingers and curled them, touching that hard-to-reach spot within her that caused a second shockwave to erupt through her core.

While she came, his tongue glided easily to her opening, lapping up the juices that dripped from her wildly aroused cunt.

As her release subsided, Heidi sucked him harder. Faster. Lillian kept up, her even strokes sending him to the edge of madness. He'd lost track of Varin, but judging by the heightened bursts of ecstasy raging through him, he knew the other man was as close to losing control as he was.

"Stop." The word might have been a grunt. Luke wasn't sure he'd even been coherent, but the women seemed to understand.

He barely held on to his self-control as Heidi shuffled over the length of his body to come to a complete stop by his feet. Lillian leapt off the altar and stood just slightly off to the side. Her puffy nipples had drawn up into stiff little buds, and a flush had crept over her chest. Her breath came in heavy pants. The scent of musk and arousal drifted from her, blending with the heady aroma of Heidi's spicier scent.

"Down," Luke commanded. "On your stomach."

Heidi didn't need to be told twice. Damn, she was perfect. So strong and stubborn when she had to be, yet so wonderfully obedient when it came to giving herself to them.

She bent over the edge of the altar and, using both hands, parted her ass and the folds of her pussy, allowing him a perfect view of the mouthwatering delights he'd been sampling.



From somewhere deep inside his thoughts, he heard Varin's muffled groan and knew the man would have given anything to be buried to the hilt inside Heidi right along with him.

"I want you both," Heidi said, her voice taking on a whimpering edge. "I need to feel you both in me."

Luke swallowed hard, completely at a loss. At that moment, he wanted to please her more than he'd ever wanted anything in his entire life, but he had no idea how to give her what she so desperately craved. Obviously, breaking himself into two was impossible, so how could they --

*The candle. That fat one over there.*

A groan caught in Luke's throat. *When did you get so brilliant?*

He thought he heard a chuckle graze his mind. *I think it's a side effect of being inside you.*

The blatant innuendo caused Luke's self-control to slip another notch, tumbling down a well of intoxicating lust from which he thought he might never come up for air.

With his right hand, he swept up some of Heidi's generous juices and then smoothed them down over the length of his cock. His left reached for the candle Varin had indicated. Snapping off some of the melted wax that had gathered at its base, Luke quickly fashioned a smooth makeshift toy.

*I bet the altar boys who set these out never even contemplated the possibility of such a use.*

Luke grinned. *You'd be surprised. I was an altar boy, once, too. The stories I could tell you...*

As his words trailed off, he nudged Heidi's flushed labia with the end of the candle. She quivered, tossing him a curious look over her shoulder. She didn't utter the question, though he knew she had to be wondering what he had planned. The flare in those impossibly blue eyes told him she trusted him.

Implicitly.

That knowledge staggered him. He was the one who'd brought her into this mess, yet she still looked at him as though he could do no wrong.

Smearing the cream he'd gathered between Heidi's buttocks, he caressed the tight rose of her anus, then slipped a thumb inside, loosening the tight ring of muscle.

From the corner of his eye, he caught sight of Lillian, who'd moved aside. "We're not done with you yet," Luke said. "On the altar. Kneel."

He'd expected her to refuse, if Heidi wouldn't, so when Lillian simply did as she was told, Luke shook his head to clear it. God, no wonder Varin had loved them both. They were so similar, yet somehow everything he adored about Heidi seemed amplified in her, while those same qualities appeared dimmed in Lillian. Hidden beneath the surface.

The man who finally managed to peel back the layers of Lillian's soul was in for a real treat. He only hoped someone actually took the time to do it.

That is, if they lived long enough.

Putting that thought out of his mind, he glanced between Lillian's parted thighs. The folds of her pussy glistened with her arousal. She kept her hands at her sides, but her palms were clenched into fists. To keep from touching herself, he thought.

No problem. If she wouldn't do it, he would.

Reaching between Lillian's legs to stroke the wet heat nestled there while at the same time thrusting the candle into Heidi's slick pussy took some coordination, but Luke managed. The women moaned in unison, the sound of their gathering pleasure warring with the howls coming from outside.

Thick and pulsing, Luke's cock easily found a way to nestle snugly between Heidi's parted ass cheeks. He held his throbbing rod there for a moment, letting the full impact of what he had in mind sink in.

"My thoughtful men," Heidi murmured, love clearly echoing through her words. "I should have known you wouldn't leave me wanting."

She tossed her curls over a shoulder and sent him a wicked, heart-stopping smile. A *real* smile that even seeing his fingers play among Lillian's delicate folds didn't manage to dim.

Her eyes sparkled as she touched the tip of her tongue to her upper lip. That small, innocent gesture nearly made Luke spill his load.

"You get it now, don't you?" Heidi asked, turning to Lillian. The woman ducked her chin into her chest and avoided Heidi's eyes. "You understand why I sacrificed everything for them?"

Lillian shook her head, looking baffled. Her stomach muscles contracted and she whimpered as Luke slipped a finger inside her moist pussy.

Unconcerned with whether or not Lillian could conceive the depth of what had happened between him, Heidi and Varin, Luke pressed the tip of his cock against the entrance to Heidi's back passage.

She grunted softly and he went slow, feeding the candle between the folds of her pussy, twirling it slightly as her inner walls adjusted to the thick intrusion.

He flicked his other wrist and thrust deeply inside Lillian's cunt, adding a second finger alongside the first. She quivered and lowered her body, taking more of him inside her.

Slick with her juices, Luke's cock slipped easily inside Heidi's ass. He took his time, letting her set the pace. She didn't wait long before nudging her ass against his groin, pushing herself along the length of his shaft, demanding everything he had to give and more.

When he came to a stop, fully embedded inside her, she sighed with contentment. "Fuck me." Her head rolled back, red curls tumbling over creamy shoulders. "Both of you."

Luke withdrew his cock from her depths, taking the candle along with him, then plunged them both inside her heated core. She gasped, a whimpering cry slipping from her lips. "Oh... More. Please."

He found his rhythm that way, straddling the line between focusing on keeping both hands moving and thrusting his cock deep inside Heidi's tight channel. Her inner muscles squeezed his shaft while Lillian's pussy fluttered around his fingers, and the combined aroma of their passion soared through the church, filling the steaming air.

Even Varin seemed to lose his ability to speak. Luke closed his eyes, feeling the other man in every thrust of his cock inside Heidi's pussy. She arched her back and slammed herself against him, again and again, milking his cock with every sweep of that glorious ass.

Lillian broke first. Her gasps turned into eager, encouraging cries, as if the part of her she kept under such tight restraint had slipped away for a moment.

A moment was all it took. The flush tainting her chest crept into her cheeks. She squatted low, taking his fingers as far into her body as she could, then, with one last shuddering moan, came hard around his thrusting hand.

Through it all, Heidi's ass never stopped moving. Her inner muscles clenched, gripping him hard and fast, stroking him all the way to the root of his shaft, summoning heat and electric bliss from the bottom of his pulsing sac.

Heidi's body shook. Her ass slammed against his belly and he felt her orgasm hit in one intense burst that made light erupt behind his eyelids a moment before his cock did.

Hot, sticky semen burst from his rod, drenching Heidi's back channel in the physical result of two men's hunger for their mate. She arched into it, taking it all, her breaths coming faster with every pulse of her still-spasming pussy.

Luke pulled his fingers from Lillian's depths, tossed the candle to the floor and wrapped his arms around Heidi. Yanking her back against him, he rolled over and sat on the edge of the altar, waiting for the world to right itself around him.

Heidi placed her palms over his and squeezed, the rhythm of her breathing growing shallower with each passing second.

*She's so beautiful.*

"So beautiful," Luke agreed, placing a soft kiss on top of her curls.

He didn't know how long they sat there like that. A second. A minute. Days. It wouldn't have mattered. The threat surrounding them seemed to fade into the night, giving them space to recover.

"It wasn't just the sex," Lillian whispered at last, her slightly accented voice breaking the sensual spell that had been woven around them. "That's what I didn't understand. It was... this bond. Their indulgent, solicitous need to please you. To hold you." She lifted her hand from her thigh where it had come to rest, and wiggled her fingertips in front of Heidi and Luke's faces. "See the red flare in the magical strands? That's love. Real, intense, all-encompassing love."

Luke didn't see a thing.

He'd just opened his mouth to say so when the church's foundation began to rumble, causing a deep quaking -- like thunder booming much too close -- to echo through the place.

A moment later, the walls came crumbling down.

## Chapter Six

*Just one minute more... I want to hold her another second, just long enough to --*

Luke's voice boomed through the cavern of Varin's mind, then snapped abruptly, the sound echoing in his brain like the lingering shadow of a distant memory he couldn't quite grasp. He tried to focus, to peer through Luke's eyes, but the man's eyelids had drifted closed and all Varin could see was the darkness that had been his constant companion for much too long.

*Heidi! Damn it, Luke! Where is she? Can you see her?*

Luke opened his eyes. There was smoke everywhere, a thick, billowing black cloud of it. It clogged the man's throat, filled his nostrils and made them both gag.

Luke's arms were empty. He reached out, clawing desperately in a feeble search for the woman who only moments ago had been tucked safely against his chest.

"Heidi!" Luke bellowed, the scream driven by the soul-numbing fear that had enveloped them both.

*Let me. Please, Luke. Let me find her.*

Bits of plaster and brick fell around Luke's head, some of the larger pieces digging into his arms and bare chest as they toppled down from the ceiling. Varin held his breath while Luke dropped to his hands and knees and inched forward, knowing the man needed to be in control just as much as Varin did.

If anything had happened to Heidi...

He didn't even dare finish that thought. They'd been through too much, sacrificed everything to find even just a shred of happiness. To have it all end like this, on the decaying, stained floor of a crumbling building, meant all that struggle had been for naught. Baal would win. And he'd gloat for all eternity.

Luke hesitated. His nails dug into the floorboards, leaving deep gashes as he dragged them over the blackened surface. The smoke had intensified, making it hard to see, to breathe, to think.

"All right," Luke conceded, and at that moment Varin knew exactly how much it had cost him to utter those words. "Her life is in your hands. Take care of her."

A whoosh of hot air spun Varin around. A moment later, he was in full control of Luke's body, trying to peer through squinting eyes and lowered lashes. She was close. He could feel her presence deep in his heart.

It made no sense, he knew, but he would have bet his immortal soul on the fact that Baal hadn't gotten his filthy claws on her. And as long as the Lord of the Underworld hadn't yet dragged her into his lair, there was still a chance Luke and Heidi would survive this. There was still hope.

For all the good hope would do them.

*"Menerva est'ar va!"*

Lillian's booming voice reached his ears a moment before the smoke cleared around him abruptly, as though someone had puffed out a breath strong enough to scatter the scalding mass.

Varin blinked fast, trying to focus through the mist clouding his vision. The smoke had stung Luke's eyes, making them water.

He saw her at last, crumpled in a heap at the edge of the room. For a moment, he could only make out the blood pooling beneath her, and his heart did a skittering flip-flop in his chest.

Rushing to her side, he fell to his knees and nearly cried out when her eyelashes fluttered.

She opened her eyes and pierced him with an intense, soul-shattering stare. "Varin," she whispered, trailing her fingertips over Luke's jaw.

His knees went weak at the sound of his name on her lips. The fact that she'd recognized him instantly, even though he still inhabited another man's body, should have floored him. Instead, it only reinforced what he already knew.

Heidi was like no one he'd ever met during the span of his long existence, either in the mortal or immortal realms. She was unique, his Heidi... and he'd be damned if he'd lose her to a creature that would trap her in a timeless realm and torture her for eons.

Lillian skidded to a stop beside Heidi's fallen form and dropped to a squatting position beside her. Under different circumstances, Varin might have been aware of Lillian's nude body, glistening with sweat and a thick film of soot from the billowing smoke.

As it was, he only had eyes for one woman.

He held her right hand while Lillian grabbed the other. "I think we've just run out of time," she said, her blue eyes wide and imploring as she fixed him with a pleading stare. "Which spell did you cast? When you brought me through the veil with you -- which one?"

Varin shook his head, wincing at the terror in her voice. Had she feared him just as much when she'd been in the Underworld with him? Had she hated him as much as he hated Baal for keeping him and everyone he cared about captive for so long?

He licked his suddenly dry lips and nearly staggered at the unfamiliar feel of Luke's silky-soft mouth beneath his tongue. "The binding spell," he murmured softly, unable to meet Lillian's eyes. He kept his gaze focused on Heidi instead, who was struggling to stand.

When her torso swayed unsteadily as she rose, Varin pulled her into his chest and pressed a hand behind her head. The wound had nearly stopped bleeding, and for the first time Varin's heartbeat slowed a little, right down to something an athlete might feel after running a marathon.

"The... binding," Lillian said as a howl rose on the wind. A gaping hole where the roof had been allowed some of the moonlight to pour through, and the silvery light caused her blue eyes to glow with a fevered incandescence. "You're sure?"

He swallowed hard. "Yes."

Even Heidi looked startled when she pulled back. "But that's --"



“Yes.”

He knew what it was. A mating spell. An incantation uttered to bind souls together for all eternity. No wonder no Demon Guardian before him had thought to try it on a mere mortal.

The second explosion hit without warning, sending shards of split brick, wood and dust soaring into the air around them. Varin protected Heidi from the flying particles as best he could by shielding her with his body, but he knew it wasn't enough. The earth shook as though all the demons residing in Hell had decided to break through the surface right underneath their feet.

Lillian's set her mouth in a grim line. She nodded at Heidi. “Together.”

The sound of their raised voices made Varin cling to Heidi even harder. Her breasts pressed against his chest and she wrapped her arms around him as she chanted, seeming to brace herself for the end of the world.

Pain lanced through him. The scattered fragments of crumbling brick and mortar seemed to aim right for him, but the agony ripping through his soul was a thousand times more difficult to bear.

The magical words drifted high into the air, more powerful even than the menacing growls and fierce roars coming from outside the fallen church. Luke's body trembled, his soul answering their call.

Lillian slipped her hand into his, closing the circle, heightening the impact of the channeling process. He felt the power of the magic they spun around them, wielding it through Luke to filter the force of their spell and send it bursting out a hundred times as strong.

The incantation faded as the women reached the final stanza. He heard the words drift and vanish, followed the dying notes as they scattered through the filthy air.

And then... nothing happened.

Laughter boomed around them, familiar and so evil it made his blood turn to ice. Baal's vicious cackle seemed to swagger, an arrogant sound that caused Varin to tighten his grip, even though he already held Heidi as tightly as he dared.

They'd tried to take on the Lord of Darkness himself, and failed miserably. Now the people Varin loved most in the entire world would pay the price for that foolish attempt.

Heat rose around them, sizzling the few floorboards that remained untouched by the rising earth rumbling beneath their feet. It burned Luke's skin, singed the hair on the back of his neck.

"I'm sorry," Varin whispered, tilting Heidi's chin up with his fingertips and pressing a tender kiss to her swollen lips.

She nodded and started to speak, but he lifted a finger to her mouth. He couldn't bear to hear her tell him it was all right.

It wasn't. It never would be.

Lillian squeezed his hand. He marveled at the way her fingers stayed surprisingly cool even in the face of the rising heat that would soon envelop them all and draw them down into the Underworld for the rest of eternity.

On impulse, he turned his head and leaned in, sliding his lips against Lillian's for a feather-light graze of his mouth against hers.

"So sorry," he whispered, touching the tip of his tongue to her lower lip in a gentle, tentative swipe.

She froze. In the span of a heartbeat, Heidi froze with her, leaving him holding two perfectly still marble statues in his arms.

For a moment, Varin wondered if he'd made a bigger mess of things than Baal could have ever done. Luckily for him, a moment was all he had.

Disaster saved him from having to contemplate that terrifying thought. In a flash, the entire world seemed to shatter and break on an intense burst of light.

Luke cried out, the howling scream coming from somewhere deep in Varin's brain. The spell Lillian and Heidi had so carefully crafted suddenly flooded Luke's soul,

kicking Varin out of the other man's body and sending him soaring, face-first, into oblivion.

## Chapter Seven

She'd died.

Though Heidi refused open her eyes, she could feel the inevitable truth of that knowledge in every fiber of her being. Silence surrounded her, thick and heavy with foreboding. She remembered the church collapsing, the guttural howls in the air that signaled the demons' pleasure.

She could even remember the heavy weight pressing against her heart as Varin's lips made contact with Lillian's.

And then... that's where things turned fuzzy. There'd been a scream. And then another and another, the cries blending together and making it impossible to know who'd been in so much pain.

Heidi sucked in a breath between clenched teeth, remembering the stab of agony in the back of her head. She'd slammed the base of her skull against something when a large piece of debris whacked her in the shoulder and sent her skittering backward. The edge of the altar, she thought, though she couldn't be sure. Smoke had obscured her vision, making it impossible to see two steps in front of her.

Odd... there was no pain now. Not even a lingering numbness or chill from the blows her body and head had endured. There was only warmth. Pleasant and balmy, even the heat held no hint of the sweltering temperature that had threatened to scorch the building, and them with it. And then there was the scent. A pleasant aroma tickled her nostrils, causing her to furrow her brow and force herself to think before she could name it.

*Flowers.* Redolent with sweetness and delicate tendrils of honeyed perfume.

Okay, she didn't need to be smacked over the head with a clue stick to understand there was something terribly wrong here. She'd been in Hell. She knew the

stench and horrifying racket that belonged to the Underworld, and none were as benign as flowers and a soft breeze. And... wait, was that a bird's carefree chirp echoing above her head?

That last sound undid her. Forcing her eyelids to open took more determination than she'd thought. The sea of clear blue that filled her gaze made her gasp and shoot up. Her hands sprang out at her sides, steadying her as she glanced around her surroundings.

Her breath caught in her throat, and the steady *thump thump* of her heart drowned out all other sounds. She sat in a meadow filled with dazzling wildflowers. Purples, pinks and reds tinted the green grass with splotches of bright contrast. Near her foot, a bunny sat on its hind legs and stared at her, his tiny nose twitching as he waited for her to make a move.

He bolted as she twisted sideways to take in more of her surroundings. When her gaze fell on her men, she feared her heart had stopped beating altogether. The steady, fearful thumping against her ribcage was gone. So was the rush of blood in her ears and the memory of those screams. For a second that seemed to stretch into minutes, it felt as though the world stood still.

Oh yeah. She'd died all right.

But against all odds, she'd gone to Heaven.

Varin lay on his back, sprawled among a nest of purplish-blue blossoms that bent and stretched their soft petals toward him. The flowers appeared to caress his skin as they waved slightly in the soft breeze.

He slept like a man who'd never known fear, or pain. His chest rose and fell rhythmically and a lock of dark hair fell over his right eye. The left side of his mouth curled slightly in a contented smile, his lips parted as though on a sigh.

One arm lay out to his side. The other, he'd curled around Luke to twine his fingers in the man's hair.

For his part, Luke slept with his cheek on Varin's stomach, the tip of his nose just brushing the patch of curls at Varin's groin. That same serene smile had tilted his lips as well, and the sight of it knocked Heidi's heart back into fully-functional mode.

Heidi swore low under her breath as tears filled her eyes. Struggling to blink them back, she turned onto her hands and knees and crawled to where they were.

She'd been wrong. She hadn't died. She was dreaming.

Well, fine, then. If this was the only way she could be with them, she'd take it. When she finally awoke in the depths of the Underworld, she'd take this fantasy with her. No matter what Baal did, she'd always remember her men as they looked now. Contented and so in love that her body trembled with every step she took toward them.

When she reached their side, she didn't know who to touch first. Surprised to find her hand shaking, she let her fingertips dart almost of their own accord over Varin's flat abs to drift into Luke's silky blond locks.

Digging her teeth into her lower lip, she stretched out beside Varin and tossed a leg over his. Her palm closed over Varin's, their fingers intertwining in Luke's hair.

"I had the strangest dream," Varin murmured, and his voice slid through her like melted chocolate.

Heidi whimpered, burrowing her face in the crook of his shoulder, inhaling the musky, perfectly male scent of him.

"Not a dream," Luke said, lifting his head to watch them. His eyes widened as he took in the sight of Varin, and he reached up to stroke the man's jaw. His thumb skidded over Varin's lips, and Varin opened to him, darting the tip of his tongue over Luke's skin.

A shiver seemed to ripple through all three of them at once. A tingle of heat nestled between Heidi's legs, determined and insistent. It had been too long since they'd all been together like this. Although she had questions -- judging by the baffled looks on the men's faces as they glanced around them, they *all* had questions -- she was willing to put them aside and drift on this brief wave of newfound euphoria.

"What --"

She rose to a sitting position and pressed a finger to Luke's mouth, silencing him. "Not now. Please." The last word was a whimper.

Luke understood. She'd known he would.

Shuffling up to kneel on the other side of Varin, Luke leaned in, cupped the back of her head and pulled her forward, their mouths coming together in a soft, soul-shattering kiss. She sighed and opened to him, splaying her hands out on his chest. His tongue teased her lips, sliding over them in a slow, infinitely sensual rhythm.

Warm heat closed around her right nipple, ripping a sudden gasp from her throat. Luke chuckled against her mouth, his own attention never wavering from the determined strokes of his tongue against hers.

Varin's teeth scraped her nipple, sending a shiver of awareness down her skin. The sensitive tissue bunched and stiffened. He sucked at it greedily, cupping her other breast in his palm, twisting the lonely nipple between thumb and forefinger.

Heidi's folds grew slick. Moisture trickled between the swollen lips of her pussy, causing her to squirm slightly. She reached out with both hands, finding her men's erections and stroking each in a closed fist. Twin shudders rewarded her efforts.

They were both hard, ready for her. Her inner walls clenched and squeezed in remembered pleasure, desire coursing through her veins, warming her from the inside.

The sun beat down on them, but it was a soft warmth, pleasant even. The entire scenario was perfect.

*Too perfect, a little voice muttered in the back of her mind. It's not going to last. It never does. This is probably another one of Baal's little tricks. And it's working.*

Squeezing her eyelids shut, Heidi silenced the annoyingly insistent reminder of all they'd been through. Sure, she knew better than to let her guard down. Baal was probably even now watching and getting a good laugh at their expense.

So be it. She wasn't about to give up the most satisfying sensation she'd felt in much too long just so she wouldn't give him the satisfaction of thinking he'd won.

Hell, let him think whatever he wanted. Right now, she, Varin and Luke were the real winners.

Her palms stroked their cocks, sliding up and down the engorged length of the thick shafts. Just beneath the head, where she knew they both loved to be touched, she made a circle with thumb and forefinger and squeezed slightly before jerking her hands toward the soft skin of tender sacs.

"If death by sex was ever an option, this is the way I'd want to go," Luke murmured, each movement of his lips a kiss against her own.

Heidi made a sound, a cross between a whimper and a sob. Goddess, why hadn't she realized how much she adored his light, teasing demeanor? She thought about the way she'd treated him, growing angry when he'd sought to nudge her out of her dark moods with a wry remark, and her throat clogged.

"I love you," she whispered as Varin's fingers nudged her pussy lips open. Before he could reply, she glanced down and tilted Varin's chin so he could look into her eyes. "And you. I'd do anything for you. For both of you."

"Baby," Luke murmured, trailing a spiraling wave of hot kisses down her breasts, "You already have."

Varin's chuckle resonated with the foreign sound of his carefree pleasure, and she suddenly found she never wanted it to stop. She didn't think she'd ever get tired of hearing him laugh.

"We love you too," he said, slipping his index finger between her slit and rubbing the tender bud of her clit. "Without you, we'd still --"

"Shhh..." she soothed, her head falling back as the men concentrated on overwhelming her with deep, soul-numbing pleasure. "It was nothing."

She'd said it just to get another laugh out of him, so when Varin growled in warning, she furrowed her brows. "What?"

"If you ever do anything half as dangerous as what you've done --"

"Repeatedly," Luke put in helpfully.

Heidi glowered at him, then fixed Varin with a defiant stare. "You'll what?"



A deep rumble that seemed to come straight from Varin's chest was her only warning. Nudging Luke aside with his elbow, he wrapped his arms around Heidi's waist and drove her into the ground, covering her body with his.

His cock delved between her folds in one quick, powerful stroke. She cried out, her body rapidly molding itself to the strong muscles covering her form. Her hips reeled upward, making small circles as he dove into her mercilessly, again and again.

She reached up, tracing her fingertips over the cords that stood out in his neck. His dark eyes looked even darker than she remembered. Black and hungry, he watched her with a possessiveness that threatened to devour her whole.

Only Luke's easy laugh kept her from getting lost in those eyes, from capitulating whatever shred of dignity she had left and begging him to fuck her, to love her, to dominate and possess her.

"You have to admit you were asking for it," Luke said, the smile never leaving his face.

As Varin thrust his cock deep into her, she glanced at Luke. This time, she had no desire to see the smile wiped from his gorgeous features. He wasn't as intense and demanding as Varin, but that's what made Luke so different.

So special. So... *hers*.

Varin pushed into her cunt forcefully, again and again, withdrawing almost the full length of his cock before pounding it back into her. Heidi's inner walls clenched, desperately gripping the head of his shaft for fear of losing it altogether.

When he pulled out of her completely, she sobbed, instinctively reaching for his cock. It was wet with their juices, slick with the proof of their lovemaking. She stroked him, wondering how long he'd make her wait.

"Straddle him, Heidi," Varin said, with a nudge of his head in Luke's direction. "The poor man's waited long enough."

Luke stretched out on the ground, one hand wrapped around the root of his solid shaft, the other beckoning her closer. "Love me, demon-child," he whispered, and

whatever reservations she still held about their future shattered with those few little words.

She rolled over and did as she was told, only briefly wondering how it was that she took orders so well from the two men in her life when she'd prided herself on being stubborn and independent for so long.

Luke gripped her hips, bringing her down on his cock. She sighed, the questions fleeing from her mind as he filled her, stretched her, completed her.

No, that wasn't right. She didn't feel complete yet. She frowned, trying to glance behind her and catch sight of Varin. From the corner of her eye, she saw him kneeling behind her, his dark hair glistening in the sunlight.

Varin's fingers spread her ass cheeks and the heel of his palm nudged the base of her spine, driving her forward. She pressed her breasts against Luke's chest, giving Varin more room to explore the dark, intimate parts of her. He rubbed some of her slick moisture over the tight rose of her anus, then slipped his thumb inside the forbidden entrance past the knuckle.

As Luke thrust into her soaked folds, Varin positioned the thick, meaty head of his cock at her back entrance and pushed in slowly, carefully, until his massive shaft sank into her body balls-deep.

The groan that slipped from her lips was borne of pure, total bliss. *Now* she was complete.

Varin cupped her breasts, squeezing her nipples as he found his rhythm. Luke was just as relentless, his thumb softly caressing her clit while his cock sent waves of tingling sensation through her entire body.

The climax built rapidly and in the span of one more heartbeat, she was soaring, swiftly surging past the point of no return. Heidi's muscles tensed, her orgasm starting low in her pussy and exploding outward in a mass of trembling nerve endings and waves of sheer pleasure.

Her own spasms set off the men's releases. She couldn't have said who came first, likely because they were so attuned to one another that their joint orgasms

thundered as one. She felt them unleash their seed deep inside her body, flooding her pussy and tight anal channel with slick, warm cum.

She collapsed on top of Luke, her muscles quivering with exhaustion. Varin grunted and pulled out of her, then dropped onto his side and yanked them both close to his chest.

Heidi couldn't say how long they lay there like that, listening to the sounds of heavy panting breaths and thumping heartbeats. When she heard footsteps ruffling the grass beside her and looked up at Lillian, she only knew it hadn't been nearly long enough.

Damn, she wasn't ready for this. She opened her mouth to say so when a thought struck at the speed of lightning. "What are you doing here?"

Lillian grinned. *Grinned!* Goddess, Heidi couldn't remember the last time she'd seen the woman smile like that. On second thought, she didn't think she ever had.

Lillian placed her hands on her hips, stretching the gauzy material of the white shift she wore over her flat stomach to her full advantage. A knot of jealousy landed like hot lead in Heidi's gut, but she forced herself to push it aside when Varin kneaded the tense muscles of her shoulder, the gesture both distracting and reassuring.

"I've been sent to tell you you're free to go."

Heidi sat up, bolting off Luke so quickly his cock slipped from her folds with a loud pop. "Go? Go where?"

Lillian gestured to her left, where a dusty path snaked its way through the wildflowers. "Home, Heidi. Go home."

The men rose to stand beside her, their hands slipping into hers. She squeezed down on their broad fingers, feeling infinitely comforted by their presence. "I'm not going anywhere without them."

Lillian's grin grew broader. She lifted both hands in the air and shook her mane of blonde hair. It spilled like heavy, honey-colored waves down her back and shoulders, the tips of her locks hiding her pointed nipples.

When she lowered them, Heidi could only gape at the spread of white wings that had unfurled from her back. She knew her stunned look must have been mirrored on Luke and Varin's faces as well, because Lillian shrugged and drew them back to nestle behind her shoulder blades. Thick white feathers draped down around her arms, caressing her bare skin.

"I was sent to give you a message. You've done well. All three of you. For that, you've been rewarded."

Blowing out a loud *whoosh* of air, Heidi asked, "Is this Heaven? Are we in it?"

Lillian laughed, the silvery sound filling the meadow. "No. You're in the In-Between. This is where souls go when it's not clear which direction they should take to carry out their hereafters."

Varin's hand cupped Heidi's hip and he pulled her close to him. "I can't be here. I'm a --"

"Demon?" Lillian put in, her smile dimming just a little. "Not anymore." She stepped forward and pushed a wild, unruly curl behind Heidi's ear. "None of you are."

Luke let out a loud, ear-splitting whoop, startling Heidi so badly her hand went up to her throat on instinct alone.

"You're human," he said, sending an apologetic smile her way. Understanding dawned swiftly upon Heidi.

That explained why she didn't feel the seductive pull of darkness at her heart every time she drew in a breath. Why her soul felt lighter, her head no longer pounded and the irritability she'd been feeling had dissipated faster than she could figure out what had happened.

"You sealed the breach in the veil, ensuring no more innocent souls can be dragged through to the Underworld before their time. In doing so, you've truly redeemed yourselves. Oh, and don't worry. Baal won't give chase," Lillian assured them. "We've made sure of that."

"We?" Varin asked.

Tension ran beneath the surface of the word, causing Heidi to press her body to his side even tighter. A trickle of cum ran down the inside of her thigh, but she ignored it. This wasn't the time to suddenly turn bashful.

Lillian's smile disappeared entirely. Her blue eyes turned contemplative, focusing on memories only she could see. "You saved me too, you know. When you kissed me."

Heidi sucked in a breath of air between clenched teeth, the sound echoing like a hiss. Lillian tossed her a slightly amused look, and shook her head. "It's not like that. The secret ingredient in Varin's spell wasn't so much the ability to filter demon magic through a human. It was --"

"Love," Varin finished for her.

She nodded, sadness filling her gaze for an instant before the cheery demeanor took over once again. "As I said, I was as trapped as the rest of you. Bound by hatred, shackled to darkness." She lifted a slender shoulder in a half shrug. "Someone up here thought I've been through enough, I guess. Now I get to move on to another phase of my life."

Heidi licked her suddenly dry lips. On impulse, she reached out and hugged the other woman, letting her palms trail over the silky softness of her feathered wings. "You seem... happy."

Lillian pulled back a fraction and regarded her with a carefully guarded expression. "I'm a long way from true happiness, but I finally feel... content. That will have to do. For now."

## Epilogue

Lillian hugged her arms around herself as she watched Heidi, Luke and Varin stroll down the path that would take them back to the mortal realm. They held hands but walked pressed together thigh to thigh, as though afraid one of them might disappear if they didn't stay within close touching distance.

Heidi's curls bobbed and her shoulders trembled with mirth. She looked up at Luke and laughed at something he'd said, joy clearly written on her features. Varin slipped his hand out of hers for a moment and swatted her playfully on the rear end, then stretched and did the same to Luke. For good measure, no doubt.

Something tightened in Lillian's chest, a familiar knot that made tears sting the back of her eyes. Had she missed out on that kind of closeness because she hadn't understood that a demon could actually love?

Wiping at a stray tear that had managed to slide down her cheek, she sniffed back the rest of that self-pitying thought. It was irrelevant now. She'd never know.

Her shoulders tensed when she heard the scuffing of closed-toe boots against the grass. She didn't have to turn around to know who'd joined her. He'd watched her like a hawk since she'd arrived in the In-Between and learned of her wings, and her future.

She briefly considered ignoring him, wondering if he'd go away, then dismissed that as a real possibility. He'd stand there for the rest of eternity waiting for her to turn around, if that's what it took. The man was truly maddening.

"Gabriel," she said tersely.

"Lillian," he acknowledged, his wing brushing against hers as he strode up and stopped beside her.

"Didn't trust me to do this alone?" She hated the bitterness that tinged her tone, but couldn't help it. He'd hovered so near during the past two days that she feared she could no longer breathe without him close enough to feel it tickle his skin.

"I wasn't sure you could let them go."

She swallowed hard and shifted her weight from foot to foot, surprised by his admission. "I could. And I did."

His grunt might have been agreement, or skepticism. Right then, she didn't care which.

She pushed past him, following the same path Heidi, Luke and Varin had taken only moments earlier. "If you'll excuse me. I have work to do."

He fell into step beside her. She quickened her pace. Annoyingly, so did he. When she couldn't stand it anymore, she whirled on him and threw her hands in the air. "What now?"

A slow, easy grin spread over his features, revealing a deep dimple in his right cheek. She nearly groaned. Damn it, she didn't want to notice his dimples, or anything else about him. She just wanted to be rid of him. Period.

*Liar, liar, pants on fire.*

She clenched her teeth so hard pain resonated through her jaw, but at least the ache distracted her from the inane chant echoing through her mind.

Gabriel reached up and brushed his knuckles along the underside of her chin. And damn if the intimate feel of his skin against hers didn't send her thoughts spinning in every direction they shouldn't have.

"Cheer up, sunshine. Didn't anyone tell you? I'm your partner."

**The End... For Now?**

## **Lacey Savage**

Award-winning author Lacey Savage loves to write about her dreams -- or more specifically, she loves to breathe life into her steamy fantasies (and she's got plenty!). She pens erotic tales of true love and mythical destiny, peopled with strong alpha heroes and feisty heroines. A hopeless romantic, Lacey loves writing about the intimate, sensual side of relationships. She currently resides in Ottawa, Canada, with her loving husband and their mischievous cat. You can learn more about Lacey by visiting her website at <http://www.laceysavage.com>, and can reach her at [laceysavage@rogers.com](mailto:laceysavage@rogers.com).