

A person wearing a dark suit jacket and a white shirt is holding a large, glossy red heart. The heart is the central focus and contains the title and author's name in a white, cursive font. The person's hands are visible at the bottom, cradling the heart.

*The Devil and  
Venus de Milo*

*Misty Evans*

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The Devil and Venus de Milo  
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## Roses are red...

My affair with the devil started with Venus de Milo.

As I stood admiring her statue in the Louvre, it was like the Goddess herself breathed on me, and I felt a rush of warm air caress my skin. "Ah, Aphrodite of Melos," a low voice muttered behind my right shoulder.

Being a witch, I'd searched for love in all the wrong places as well as all the right ones and tried every love potion in existence with no success. Even my best friend, a voodoo priestess, had performed some wonky hex supposed to bring me my heart's desire. All Keisha's voodoo did was supply me with a bathtub full of Dove chocolates.

Not that I minded all that rich, dark candy, I just wished it would have come with a sinful man to strip off the wrappers.

Deciding I wasn't cut out for true love, I settled on the next best thing...designer shoes. I suckered Keisha into flying to Paris with me where I maxed out my credit card in a Christian Louboutin boutique on black platform stilettos splashed with stars on the four-inch heels. Wanting to show the wicked things off, Keisha and I stopped at the Louvre so I could demonstrate my best Top Model impression. Who needs love when you have Louboutin?

The Louvre had that overwhelming old-world feeling so prevalent in European buildings. Keisha claimed the stones vibrated with life and had journeyed off to find a ghost to talk to.

The click-clack of my stilettos followed me into the world of Greek mythology. As I stood before the statue of Venus de Milo that day—one day before Valentine's, mind you—I suddenly found myself doing a Princess Leia impression. *Please your Goddessship, you're my only hope. I need a man and I need him bad. I'm not picky, either.*

Okay, that was sort of a lie, but listing my demands—dark, handsome, mysterious, and one who doesn't care I'm a witch—might hurt my chances, so I ended my plea with, *any man worthy of my love.*

I defined *worthy of my love* as intelligent, worldly, and, well, sexy as Orlando Bloom.

My wish upon a goddess had barely formed when that warm rush of air caressed my skin.

I turned my head and my pulse jumped. A man with dark eyes and blue-black hair met my gaze. He held a single long-stemmed red rose in his hand. "She is beautiful, no?"

Orlando Bloom with a French accent. Talking to me. In the Louvre.

I glanced up at Venus's face. *Wow, you work fast. I appreciate the rush job.*

Her gaze stayed fixed on some distant horizon, seemingly oblivious to me and my situation. Returning my attention to Orlando's twin, I realized a sane woman would agree with him about Venus's beauty. Instead, I raised a finger and challenged him. "Her face is too bland, as if she doesn't feel anything. The Goddess of Love should show great emotion. Deep passion, don't you think?"

He stepped forward, his shoulder brushing mine. Heat bloomed at the spot and raced down to my toes. An erotic, smoky smell enveloped me as if he'd just left a sizzling fireplace to come view Venus. I love a good fire, love the smell of burning wood, and his scent sent a delicious tingle to certain parts of my sex-starved body.

The strong lines of his jaw sported a day's worth of beard. He stroked his chin with a finger. "Yes, the details of her body are exquisite. The collarbone, her breasts, her stomach. Even the drape of the cloth around her waist shows great detail meant to scintillate the observer. Her face, though, as you say, is somewhat devoid of character."

Dropping his hand from his chin, he studied me. "Your face, on the other hand, *c'est magnifique*. You would have been perfect for the sculptor to use as a model. There is much passion in your eyes."

I'd never heard a better pickup line, but then I was wearing a higher than normal grade of shoes.

All of my human senses were enjoying his show, but my heart was too guarded to crack, even a little. "I bet that line works on a lot of women." I pointed to the rose. "Now you hand me the rose and ask me to go have a cup of cappuccino in the café down the street, right?"

A grin tugged at one side of his mouth. "Actually, the rose is for the Goddess." He leaned over the short plexiglass fence and laid the rose at her feet. As he stood back up, he stuffed his hands in the pockets of his jeans, looking somewhat bashful. "I make an offering every Valentine's Day in hopes she'll forgive me for my past failings and give me a chance at true love."

Damn, he was a romantic. I love romantics.

Or maybe he was just a really good pickup artist. Those I don't love, so there was only one way to tell. Opening up my supernatural senses, I allowed a wisp of magick to unfurl in my chest.

"Her right hand originally crossed under her breast and rested there on her left leg," he said, pointing. "In her left hand she held an apple."

Gingerly, I sent my magick out in his direction. "An apple? Not exactly a symbol of love."

He glanced at me, an intensity, a knowing in his eyes. "You do not find apples—the forbidden fruit— sexy?"

Well, yeah, I guess when he put it that way with his eyes looking like melted chocolate. "Sex and love are not the same though."

The dark eyes sparked at my bullheadedness. "You are a philosopher then."

"Not a philosopher, just a logical woman." I held out a hand. "My name is Amy."

He took my hand and I directed my magick to slide into the handshake. Without warning, his eyes blazed with heat and his hand tightened on mine. He paused, as if he knew exactly what I was doing, and then he smiled, cat-like. "A pleasure to meet you. I'm Luc."

### **...The Devil wants you.**

A bolt of energy zigzagged from my palm to my wrist, and my pulse hop-scotched under my skin. All my senses, human and supernatural, sounded alarms. I jerked my hand back, but my magick refused to return to my chest. The tilt of Luc's mouth told me he knew it too.

He was supernatural. Witch? Warlock?

Demon?

My mouth went dry. Stepping back, I sent a mental SOS to Keisha to quit ghost hunting and come rescue me.

Luc let loose a tendril of his own magick and it slithered around mine in a flirtatious dance, inviting me to touch it. His was a mix of fire and energy unlike any I'd ever encountered. It tantalized my air element, sucking at it without touching it, making me want it. Making me want him.

He was powerful, whoever, whatever he was. Under his spell, my anxiety eased and a desire to play with his magick bubbled in my blood. His magnetism drew me in close and enchanted me, turning my hesitation into confidence within seconds.

The attraction of mixing my magick with his was overpowering.

"Go ahead, Amy," he murmured.

Boldness is one of my virtues. Lust, my biggest vice. Put the two together, and, well, I end up in the Louvre in two-thousand dollar stilettos ready to mix it up with a man so supernaturally strong, I could die just from touching him.

While the prospect should have scared the hell out of me, it did just the opposite. Mesmerized by his eyes and burning from his heat, I blew my air magick at him full force.

His fire caught it, and energy exploded around us. The combustion nearly knocked me off my Louboutins. I swayed, and he grabbed me, his hands branding an imprint on my skin as if my coat and sweater didn't exist.

It was sexual and it wasn't. It was...consuming. Body, mind, soul. Everything supercharged with energy. As it popped and flared between us like lightning strikes, his eyes widened a fraction. "You," he whispered, surprise evident in his face.

The sound of his voice sent another way of energy coursing through my body, tingling every part I had. I was too far gone to ask what he meant by his simple statement.

"Amy?" Keisha's voice sounded far away, as if she existed on another plane. "Are you all right?"

My mouth refused to answer. My eyes refused to break contact with Luc's.

She tried again in her best angry-black-woman voice. "Amy Evelyn Atwell, what is going on here?"

Still locked in Luc's magick, I tried to get my brain to function. What exactly was going on here?

Luc dropped his hands, breaking our physical contact. *No*, my body cried, but it was too late. The fire retreated as he reeled his magick in, taking the scorching heat and simmering sexuality with it.

He stepped back and faced Keisha. "Why, Keisha, my dear." He gave her a hooded look. "I didn't realize you were in Paris."

Keisha's dark brows were already drawn together in a frown. Their dip deepened over her nose while she eyed Luc up and down. "Do I know you?"

As he answered, I noticed in my haze of magick-withdrawal that he'd lost his French accent. "Yes, actually, you do. We have contracted certain ...business... together."

Keisha's big, brown eyes grew to the size of the Dove chocolates in my coat pocket. Her voice quivered. "I've never done business with your kind."

Luc's nod was sure. "Yes, you have, and you will again."

Her gaze cut to mine and she grabbed my arm. "We need to leave. *Now.*"

"Allow me." Luc reached up and touched my cheek with a finger. Warm desire flushed my skin at his touch. "As I said earlier, a pleasure, Amy."

Pleasure was an understatement. As I watched him give Venus a quick bow and walk away, the solid fit of his blue jeans made my mouth water. I popped a Dove into my mouth and sighed.

### **A contract signed in blood...**

Keisha crossed her arms over her chest and tapped her foot on the floor. "Damn, woman, you know who that was?"

All my body parts answered along with my mouth, "A total god?"

"A total devil is more like it." She glanced over her shoulder and lowered her voice. "The aura around you two was blood red when I walked up. You didn't promise him anything, did you?"

With my mind, no. With my body? I wasn't sure. "I was pretty much speechless during that whole red aura part."

A sigh of relief rushed out of her. "Good." She adjusted the brightly dyed shawl around her shoulders. "He enchanted you, you know, and you fell for it. You're so easy."

I couldn't stop the grin that rose to my lips. I gazed at Venus and had a sudden craving for apples. "Yeah, I know."

I didn't miss Keisha's eye roll. "Let's get out of here."

Venus stood there, still calm and serene. The rose Luc had laid at her feet had opened to full bloom. I stooped and picked it up.

Holding the petals to my nose, I inhaled deeply, letting their velvet softness rest on my lips. The heady fragrance, musky and sweet, sent a white-hot caress to my nerve endings. My nipples rose to attention.

Just like Luc's magick, it was sexual and something more. Something tantalizing and dark. I took another deep breath, enthralled.

As I closed my eyes, I rubbed the rose's petals against the spot on my cheek Luc had touched. The softness was as seductive as the smell. An image exploded on the back of my eyelids—me and Luc naked at the base of Venus de Milo's statue, rose petals all around us. I suddenly wanted to rub those petals all over my body.

Just as the image started to become a full-length movie, Keisha pinched me. "What the hell are you doing?"

I jumped and felt the prick of a thorn on my thumb. Opening my eyes, I narrowed them at her. "Enjoying fantasy sex since real life sex is nonexistent for me. Do you mind?"

Her gaze shifted to the rose. "Amy, where did that come from?"

I held it out and pointed it at the statue. "Luc brought it for Venus. He makes an offering to her every Valentine's Day."

"An offering for what?"

"He asks for forgiveness for past failings and a chance at true love."

She blanched. "Look at your thumb."

Bright red blood ran down my thumb onto the rose's stem and dripped to the floor. "Dang it, I hate thorns."

Keisha's voice came out low and edged with fear. "The Devil's contract signed in blood."

"What are you talking about?" I held my hand out to keep the drips from landing on my new shoes. "Give me a tissue."

She opened her beaded bag and pulled one out of a travel pack. "You just made a deal with the Devil, Amy."

"Don't be silly. He may have been a demon, but he's not Satan."

She raised one brow. "What do you think Luc is short for?"

"Lucas?"

"Lucifer."

My stomach clenched. I grabbed the tissue and wrapped it around my thumb, still hanging onto the rose. "What would Lucifer want with me?"

"You just told me he wanted a chance at true love." She tapped her toe on the floor again. "The same thing as you."

**...gives Lucifer his due.**

Keisha's words hit me like a freight train. While fooling around with Luc held great appeal, I certainly couldn't fathom a walk down the aisle with a demon. Still, at the memory of our magicks interlacing, I clutched the rose tighter. "Tell me you can undo your hex."

"You think my hex did this?" She swept an arm out, encompassing me and Venus in the motion. "I'm an accomplished Voudin, but this magick is way beyond what I can do."

"Are you sure?"

We stared at each other for a moment and I saw a light bulb go on above her pareo-wrapped dreadlocks. "Maybe I did hook you and Lucifer up." Her lips turned up in a sly smile. "Maybe I'm better than I thought."

Dumbfounded by her sudden self-confidence, I stood and watched as she paced a few steps in front of me, turning the idea over in her mind. "Think about what this could mean for my business. I could expand into matchmaking. Do weddings. Have my own reality show like that millionaire matchmaker on Bravo." She clapped her hands together and then used one to outline an imaginary marquee. "Priestess Keisha, Supernatural Matchmaker."

She looked at me, her face positively radiant. "What do you think?"

Was she serious? "It's not very catchy."

Her face fell. "You're right. How about Super Matchmaker?" She shook her head. "Magic Matchmaker?"

"So, let me get this straight," I said. "I get the Devil and you get a TV reality show."

She pointed a finger at me. "Don't get your bikinis in a bunch. You'll get some face time on TV. You'll be my spokesperson, after all."

That night, I lay awake in bed, listening to the sounds on the street outside the small inn where we were staying. The rose sat in a glass of water on the bedside table, withered and fading. I thought about Keisha's pronouncement about the blood contract. If I was now connected to Luc, Devil or not, I needed to know.

As the clock struck midnight, I gathered my courage and sent out a mental invitation to him. *Luc? It's Amy. Can we talk?*

Seconds ticked by on the wall clock, then minutes. Sometime after two, I fell asleep.

When I awoke, an exotic smell filled the air. A smell that now seemed familiar to the cells of my body. That strange tingling sensation ran up and down my spine, speeding up my heart rate, flushing my skin. Taking a deep breath, I kept my eyes closed and hoped it was a dream.

"Are you hiding from me?" Luc's voice was soft in my ear.

Goosebumps rose on my skin, and I shivered under the duvet. "Yes."

He chuckled, low and deep, and the sound vibrated inside me. "You fear me?"

"I don't even know you."

"Perhaps if you opened your eyes, we could remedy that."

I did and a dozen candles around the room flamed to life, showcasing Luc beside the bed with an ornate silver tray in his hands. His eyes were as dark as my previous morning's espresso and his smile was charming.

As I sat up and shifted pillows so I could put my back against the headboard, I saw the tray held a simple, yet elegant display. A dozen chocolates were laid out on a lace doily that lined a white porcelain plate. A green apple had been sliced into delicate slivers and fanned out on one side of the chocolates. The rose in the glass now decorated the corner of the tray. I noticed it was in full bloom again, healthy, vibrant. Next to it was a small replica of Venus de Milo like the Louvre sold in the gift shop.

"Happy Valentine's Day," Luc said and set the tray on the nightstand. Then he dropped down beside me on the bed, lifting a slice of apple and putting it to my lips.

His magick poured over me and I closed my eyes for a second, taking a deep breath and hunting for some reason not to accept the forbidden fruit. The synopses in my brain refused to cooperate and I grasped at nonsense. "It was the shoes, right?" I opened my eyes and met his gaze. "The reason you hit on me?"

He kept the slice of apple close to my lips. "What man could resist you in those shoes?"

"Right, that's what I thought, but Keisha had this crazy idea that you were the Devil and I..."

The apple slice slipped into my mouth and my taste buds exploded with a mix of tart and sweet. I savored the texture as well. "God, that's good."

At the look that passed over his face, I bit my lip. "Sorry about the G-O-D reference."

Luc picked up a piece of chocolate, brought it to my lips and smiled. My body and my magick responded. "God cannot even imagine how good it will be between the two of us."

The smell of the chocolate was intoxicating. So was the look in Luc's eyes. I shivered in anticipation. "Really?"

"Really."

He slipped the candy into my mouth. The truffle's dark chocolate shell gave way to a delicious liquor taste, creamy and decadent on my tongue. My head fell back and I moaned with pleasure.

I felt Luc's finger trace a vein on my neck and a thrill went through me. Bringing my head back up to face him, I reached out and picked up a slice of apple. "Your turn."

Desire flared in his eyes. His fire magick reached out and licked at me, and my air magick responded, feeding him. If Keisha had been watching, she would have seen the same blood red aura around Luc and I as she'd witnessed at the Louvre.

He leaned forward and his lips left their mark on my fingers as he took the apple slice into his mouth. In that instant, a cosmic shift occurred inside me. My conscience, my emotions, my psyche, all went through an evolution. They died and were reborn in the seven seconds my heart stopped beating.

The room spun and I grasped Luc's arms. He held me through waves of pleasure and pain, stroking my hair and whispering ancient words in my ears. When the spinning finally stopped, I opened my eyes, gasping for breath. "What just happened?"

He was now the one with his back against the headboard, me tucked into his chest by strong arms. "You became mine for all eternity."

The blood contract. Keisha was right. My teeth chattered, making me stutter. "I just sold...my soul...to the Devil?"

Again, his chuckle vibrated through my skin to my very organs. "You didn't sell it, Amy. You gave it to me willingly." His thumb rubbed a spot between my shoulder blades. "With a little help from Keisha's hex, of course."

As reality sunk in, my head swam with errant thoughts. "You said it was the shoes."

His thumb stopped. "Where are those shoes, by the way?"

“In the closet.”

“Will you model them for me?”

I pushed myself upright and glared at him, but it was pointless. The fire was building inside him and my air called to it. Boldness and lust warred in my veins. “What are you going to do for me?”

One corner of his mouth tipped up. He reached for a piece of apple. “Why, tempt you, of course.”

As I took the slice from his fingers, our magicks consumed each other. Soon our bodies did the same.

Hours later, I woke in tangled sheets, sunlight streaming into the room and a dark, erotic scent drifting up from my skin. Next to the bed on the silver tray, Venus stared at some distant horizon, completely oblivious to the fact I’d just become the Devil’s lover.

Apparently, Keisha was going to get her reality TV show after all.

## **Biography**

*Misty Evans is a suspense author whose muse likes to take a break from murder and mayhem on occasion to walk on the supernatural side of life. Misty’s first paranormal novella featuring Amy and Luc, WITCHES ANONYMOUS, will be released February 24<sup>th</sup> and is part of Samhain’s Tickle My Fantasy anthology. For more information visit [www.readmistyevans.com](http://www.readmistyevans.com) or [www.samhainpublishing.com/authors/misty-evans](http://www.samhainpublishing.com/authors/misty-evans) .*