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Egyptian Shifters >



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THE LION OF EGYPT

SEF, THE LION OF YESTERDAY

Egyptian Shifters 3

Marisa Chenery

EROTIC ROMANCE



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SEF, THE LION OF YESTERDAY

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DEDICATION

For my family.

SEF, THE LION OF YESTERDAY

Egyptian Shifters 3

MARISA CHENERY
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Chapter 1

Sef called out to his twin brother, Duau, as he placed himself between the gate to the underworld and the large group of demons that faced him. Duau appeared at his side a split second later.

As twins, Duau and he were virtually identical. Both of them had dark brown hair, that they both wore shoulder length, and gold eyes. They both stood at six foot ten. Along with their height, their bodies had a thick padding of muscle, which they needed since they each guarded a gate where the sun god Ra entered and exited the underworld each night.

The demons' eyes glowed red as they slowly inched closer. Sef growled in warning. "We will not allow your kind to pass through the gate."

The demon that stood out in front, who Sef assumed was their leader, returned his volley. "I didn't ask your permission, guardian. We're prepared to go through you if need be to get through the gate."

At their leader's signal, the demons drew their swords as one. In answer to the threat, Sef and Duau quickly shifted into their lion

forms. They didn't need swords to defend the gate. In the form of Barbary lions, they each weighed six hundred pounds of pure muscle. Their weapons of choice—razor sharp teeth and claws.

The lions roared as the demons suddenly went on the attack. Sef bunched his powerful back legs under him and launched himself at the closest demon. He brought the demon down before he even had time to raise his sword. Sef tore his throat out with his powerful jaws just as another demon came up behind him. He roared in pain as he took a sword cut across his one shoulder. Turning to face his attacker, Sef swatted the demon with one of his massive paws. The demon went down hard, which gave Sef the chance to move in for the kill.

The battle raged on. Both lions roared as they fought the demons. They took them down one at a time until only the demons' leader remained alive. Sef and Duau circled around him as they hemmed him in on both sides. Blood from the wounds they'd received marked their fur in places.

His eyes burned red as the demon watched the lions. They stalked closer. "You may have defeated the others, but I get the last strike."

The demon raised his hands in the direction of the lions. Sef roared with rage as he realized the demon had called upon some power to pin him in place. Duau roared as well as he fought the demon's hold. The demon laughed at their futile attempts to break free. He then started to recite a spell. Sef fought even harder when he heard the words. The demon sought to separate him from Duau and trap them both in the mortal realm. Just as the demon completed the spell, Sef only had enough time to look over at his twin before they were yanked from the underworld.

* * * *

Chandra Marshall finished inspecting the large thoroughbred gelding and patted his neck. He really was a beautiful horse, not that he'd looked it when he had first arrived. Malnourished, as well as

mistreated, the gelding had been in bad shape. What a difference the right amount of food and some loving care had made.

Closing the stall door, Chandra moved on to her next patient. A veterinarian, she ran her own animal rescue shelter, something she'd always wanted to do. After she graduated, Chandra had worked for a couple of years in a veterinarian clinic, only long enough to save up money to buy a place large enough to start her shelter. At twenty-eight, she now lived her dream on a medium sized farm on the outskirts of Toronto.

The sound of a phone ringing caused Chandra to change direction. She quickly headed to the back of the large barn where she had a small office set up. On the fourth ring she picked up the phone. "Animal Rescue Shelter."

"Hey, Chandra, it's Bill."

"Hi, Bill. What can I do for you?"

"Do you have room to take on another animal?"

"Sure do. What have you got for me this time?" An animal lover, Bill had found many injured or mistreated animals over the years, which he then brought to her to take look after.

"I have a lion for you this time."

"A lion?" She'd taken care of a few wild cats since she opened the shelter, mostly lynx, bobcat and cougar, but never a lion.

"Yes. A male lion to be exact. We have him tranquilized, but he's in rough shape. He has some pretty deep wounds. He needs your magic touch."

"Where did you find him?"

"I'll explain more when I get to your place. I'm on my way as we speak. I should be there in about five minutes. I knew you wouldn't turn him away. See you in a bit."

Chandra hung up the phone after Bill clicked off. She headed back out to the main part of the barn to check the large kennel she'd used to house the other cats. It would be a bit on the small size for a full

grown male lion, but it would hold him. The sound of Bill's van coming up her gravel drive had Chandra rushing outside to meet him.

Bill got out of his white cargo van and waved as she approached. When she joined him, he took her around to the back of the van and opened the doors. Chandra's breath caught at the sight of the large male lion stretched out asleep on the van's floor. Bill's wife, Violet, sat with the lion's head in her lap. Both in their early sixties, they looked more like grandparents, which they were, than tough and canny animal rescuers.

Violet smiled at her. "Good to see you again, Chandra. Our boy here has had a pretty rough time of it from the looks of him."

Chandra looked the lion over as she made note of the dried blood on his coat. The wounds themselves looked to be slice marks, as if someone had taken a large knife to him. "Let's get him inside the barn. I'll go open the back doors, Bill, if you want to drive around."

As Bill got back inside the van, Chandra hurried inside to open the large sliding doors at the back of the barn. She would get Bill to back right up to the kennel. Hopefully then the three of them would be able to get the lion out of the van and into it. She knew the lion would weigh a ton. Male lions could weigh several hundred pounds.

Somehow the three of them, along with the aid of the rolling table she used when she did surgery, managed to get the large lion out of the van. Luckily, he didn't come out of the tranquilized-induced sleep while they moved him. They'd had to manhandle the lion a bit more than Chandra would have liked, but there had been no going around it. After assuring Bill and Violet she'd have the lion fixed up in no time, and that she'd keep them informed of his progress, Chandra waved them off.

She returned to the barn and grabbed the things she would need to clean up the lion's wounds. Chandra then headed back over to the kennel. She knew she would have to work quickly. He could come out of it at any time. In no way did Chandra want to be inside the small kennel with a fully aware full grown male lion. It may not be

the safest thing to do, to work on the lion alone, but she didn't have an assistant to help her. The animals she had in the shelter usually weren't the dangerous type. And she preferred to work on her own.

As Violet had said, some of the wounds turned out to be on the deep side. She couldn't shake the feeling that someone had taken a really large knife, or sword, to him. A couple looked as if they could be stitched, but for now she settled for cleaning the wounds only. She would wait and see what they looked like tomorrow. Giving him more tranquilizers when she didn't know how much Bill had used on him already wouldn't be a good thing. If she gave him too much there would be a chance he'd never wake up.

Chandra had almost finished when the lion twitched as she cleaned one of his deeper wounds. She debated with herself whether to leave the last wound or to quickly take care of it. When he seemed to relax again, Chandra decided to just quickly get it over with. That turned out to be a mistake. As soon as she touched the wound he went from being under to completely awake and standing on all four paws. He moved his head right up into her face and gave her a good sniff. Chandra stiffened. She was so screwed.

Chapter 2

Chandra sat very, very still. Right now the lion didn't look as if he would go on the attack, but she didn't want to take the risk of setting him off. He took a small step back, then after a few seconds he roared and shook his head as if in denial. Chandra tried very slowly to inch closer to the entrance to the kennel on her bum. If she could make it outside she could get the gate shut and lock him inside. He swiftly moved to stand over her and looked down at her with his gold eyes as she leaned back on her hands.

"Nice, lion," she said softly. He cocked his head to the side at the sound of her voice. "You don't want to bite me. I'm only trying to help you. Some nice people brought you to me to look after your wounds. You don't want to bite your doctor."

As if he understood what she'd said, he turned his head to look back at himself. She swore he checked out a particularly deep wound that ran along his side. After a quick look, he swung his head back in her direction. Her heart started to beat faster as her fear threatened to overtake her. With a deep breath, Chandra pushed it aside. She knew if she showed her fear the lion would possibly attack her.

He suddenly lifted a paw, which happened to be bigger than her hand, and gently tapped her cheek with it. Chandra bit back a whimper. In response, he shook his large head as he put his paw back down. Much to her surprise, he then butted his head against her chest much like a house cat would do when it wanted to be petted. When he did it a second time, she lifted a shaky hand and scratched him behind his ear. A noise that sounded more like a growl/purr filled the kennel

each time the lion exhaled. It seemed to grow louder the longer she scratched him.

“You like that, don’t you?”

She smiled as he leaned in closer. Lifting her other hand, she scratched his other ear as well. He leaned against her as he purred with contentment. Chandra continued to scratch behind his ears for a few minutes longer. For such a large cat, this lion acted as if he was nothing more than an overgrown house cat. Feeling it would be safe now to move, she dropped her hands and gathered up the supplies she’d brought into the kennel to treat him. He watched her as she walked to the end of the kennel and took hold of the door to shut him inside. A large paw shot out and pushed the door back open as she started to close it.

Chandra shook her head. “Sorry, but I can’t have you wandering around loose.” He looked up at her and their gazes met. As the lion held her gaze, she suddenly found herself unable to look him up in the kennel. She somehow knew he wouldn’t do anything to hurt her and that he would be more comfortable if she took him back to the house with her instead. She shook her head, but the need to keep him close to her didn’t go away, as if the idea had taken root and wouldn’t be denied.

Stepping back, Chandra moved aside so he could walk out of the kennel. He seemed steady enough when he stood, but when he walked she could tell the tranquilizer still affected him. She let him lean against her leg as she first got rid of the supplies in her hands and then headed out of the barn.

She opened the front door of her house, a two-story brick farmhouse, and let the lion go in ahead of her. Darkness had started to fall as she’d looked after the lion’s wounds. Chandra could already hear the crickets through the open windows. Moving into the kitchen, she looked at the clock on the stove. Almost six. She turned to find the lion at her feet as he patiently watched her.

“Are you hungry? I know I am. How about I fix us both something to eat?”

Of course he didn't answer her. Chandra didn't have any raw meat to give him. What meat she had sat frozen in her freezer, but she did have a few cans of dog food kicking around. It wouldn't be the lion's normal fare, but it would have to do. She crossed over to the pantry cupboard and took out one of the cans. After she opened it, she put the whole can of dog food in one of her mixing bowls, and filled another with water. She set the bowls down in front of him and waited to see what he did with them. The lion completely ignored both bowls and continued to stare up at her. Chandra shrugged. She had tried.

With the lion now taken care of food wise, she decided to get something for herself. After a quick look in her freezer, she settled for a frozen TV dinner. Once she had it heating in the microwave, Chandra sat down at the kitchen table to wait. The lion continued to watch her every move. She studied him in return now that she didn't fear he would pounce on her.

Her brows drew together as she took in the lion's mane. It appeared to cover more of his body than an African lion's. It ran down his chest, through his front legs and down his back to below his shoulders. The mane around his face was blonde, while the rest was a very dark brown, almost black. Chandra had been able to spend a day with one of the vets that worked at the Toronto Zoo a few years back. On that day, one of the male lions had needed one of his front paws operated on. She'd been able to get up close and personal to him once they'd brought him in and he'd been tranquilized. There were definite subtle differences between the lion she'd seen in the zoo and the one now in her kitchen.

The microwave beeped and Chandra got up to get her dinner. She left it on the counter to cool a bit before she went to the living room to get her laptop computer. Placing it on the kitchen table, she booted it up. While she ate her food, she got on the internet. She typed in the

description of the lion's mane into a search engine. What came up surprised her.

As Chandra had started to suspect, this lion was not an African lion. According to the information she pulled up, he had to be a Barbary lion, which had her shaking her head. The Barbary lion's natural habitat had been in North Africa, from Morocco to Egypt. They were extinct in the wild now with only a few true Barbary lions found in zoos. How the hell had a full blooded Barbary lion come to be loose on a farm in rural Ontario? From the picture on the internet taken of a Barbary male lion, the one that currently watched her matched the picture.

After she finished her meager meal, Chandra poured herself a glass of wine and headed to the living room to watch some television before she had to go to bed. She got up shortly after dawn to take care of the animals she had out in the barn, so bedtime came early for her.

She sat down on the couch and switched on the television. The lion hopped up on the couch beside her and stretched out with his head in her lap. Chandra just about jumped out of her skin when he shoved his nose between her legs and sniffed. She pushed him away. "Stop that." He did it again, but this time he dragged his raspy tongue along the crotch of her pants. She pushed him away and shook a finger at him. "There will definitely be none of that going on, mister. I don't even let guys I go out with on first dates get that close. Not that I've had many first dates lately, but still, behave yourself."

He turned and licked her fingers before he lay back down with his head in her lap. This time he kept his head facing in the direction of the television. Chandra absently stroked his head as she skipped through the channels until she found something of interest to watch.

When she found herself nodding off a few hours later, Chandra decided she'd better head up for bed. She nudged the lion until he lifted his head off her lap and sat up on the couch beside her. "Well, big boy, time for bed. I know you're comfortable on my couch, but

I'd prefer not to have you wandering around the house while I sleep. You're going to sleep in the laundry room tonight."

Chandra got up and went to the front hall closet to collect one of the old blankets she stored there. With the lion at her heels, she went back to the kitchen and opened the door to the main floor laundry room that sat off the kitchen. She spread the blanket on the floor and looked down at the lion. He had followed her inside. "Make yourself at home and I'll see you in the morning." After closing the door behind her, Chandra went upstairs to bed.

Chapter 3

Sef watched the door close behind the mortal woman. He wished she hadn't closed him inside this smaller room, but he did understand why she didn't feel comfortable allowing him to roam around the house while she slept. She didn't know he was more than just an ordinary lion. And right now he couldn't shift back to his human form. Already weakened from the battle with the demons, thrown into the mortal realm and then hit with something that had put him to sleep, he couldn't make the change. He still felt a bit on the groggy side. Once whatever the other mortals had given him completely left his system, Sef felt sure he'd be able to shift back. He hoped.

He lay down on the blanket and wondered what had happened to his twin. When he arrived in the mortal realm, he found Duau no longer with him. He tried to call out to his brother, but he got no response. Either the spell the demon used to send them to the mortal realm prevented it, or something had happened to Duau and he couldn't answer. Sef hoped it wasn't the latter.

With his paws, he bunched the blanket up as he shifted into a more comfortable position. He thought of the woman asleep upstairs in her bed. He wished he could join her and do all the things to her body that swirled inside his head. Stuck in his lion form, Sef's sense of smell was much better than when in his human form. One whiff of the woman's scent and the lion part of him had roared with longing. The lion recognized her as his mate. When he'd managed to smell her woman's scent between her legs, it had just reinforced that she belonged to him.

If he'd been able to shift, he would have taken her to bed and claimed her as his own. The lion wanted to roar with frustration. Sef reined that part of him back. Right now he needed sleep to regain his strength, and hopefully his ability to shift. Picturing what it would feel like to have the woman naked under him as he buried his cock to the hilt into her welcoming wet heat wouldn't do him any favors.

He finally slept, but not for very long. As with all Egyptian gods, he only required a couple of hours of sleep to recharge his body. Sef got up and stood on his hind legs as he leaned against one of the white machines in the room. Looking out the one window he saw day had yet to come. He jumped down and started to pace the small room. As he paced, he tried to contact his brother. Same as before, he got no response back from Duau. Sef couldn't help but worry something had happened to his twin.

Sef continued to pace. Now that he'd slept, he felt stronger, but he held off trying to shift for a couple of reasons. First, he didn't want to become frustrated if he tried too soon, and the second, he wanted to shift to his human form in front of his mate. To show her what he truly was.

Another hour went by and Sef couldn't stand to be locked up in this smaller room any longer. Unlike a true lion that wouldn't have any idea how to work the doorknob, Sef had that knowledge. Sitting up on his hind legs, he placed a large paw on either side of the doorknob. He applied pressure to the knob and slowly turned it to the right. The door opened up into the other room as he used his body weight to push it open.

Sef padded out of the kitchen and headed for the stairs to the upper level. He followed the smell of his mate's scent up the stairs and to the very end of the hall. Her bedroom door stood wide open. Silently, he entered the room and moved around the bed until he stood at the side where his mate lay sleeping on her side. He let his gaze roam over her long blonde hair that lay spread over her pillow. In sleep, her lush lips were slightly parted. He couldn't see her blue eyes,

but he could easily see the fan of her dark blonde lashes against her cheeks. He found her beautiful. With a purr, Sef licked her cheek.

* * * *

Chandra came instantly awake at the sound of a loud purr, and the sensation of a raspy tongue being dragged across her cheek. She sat bolt upright and reached for the lamp that sat on the nightstand next to the bed. As light flooded the room, she met the gold eyed gaze of the lion who should still have been closed inside her laundry room.

“How did you get out? Now where am I going to put you until morning?”

She sat up straighter as the lion’s body started to blur. Transfixed, Chandra watched as a man soon stood in the lion’s place. She felt her jaw drop open as he stared back at her with marked desire showing in his gold eyes. Chandra slowly took in his shoulder length dark brown hair, which happened to be the same length as her own, and his tanned muscular body. He wore a snow-white kilt low on his hips and nothing else. By the way she had to crane her neck to look up at him, she knew he had to be tall, even taller than her six feet.

“You can put me in your bed until morning.” He spoke in a deep accented voice that seemed to go right through her in a good way.

“What?” With all that delicious male body bared to her view, Chandra found it hard to concentrate.

He smiled down at her, making his male model good looks even more spectacular. “You asked where you were going to put me until morning. How about in your bed?”

“My bed? Who...what are you?”

“My name is Sef. I’m one half of the Egyptian god Aker.”

Chandra felt her nipples pebble beneath her pajama t-shirt as Sef’s gaze lowered to her breasts. “A god? You’re an Egyptian god?” She had to admit he looked the part standing there in nothing but his linen kilt.

“Yes. My identical twin brother, Duau, and I are known as Aker. We guard the gates to the underworld.”

Holy shit, there were two of them?

“And because you are a god you can shape shift into a lion?”

“Yes. You ask a lot of questions.”

“I tend to do that when I’m nervous.” Chandra’s mouth went suddenly dry as Sef reached for his kilt and yanked both it and the loincloth he wore under it off his body. Unable to stop herself, she looked down his body and swallowed. His cock stood full and erect from his body. She squeaked as Sef lifted the covers on the bed and slipped in beside her. Chandra quickly moved over to the other side of the bed. “What are you doing?”

Sef shifted to lie on his side propped up on his elbow. “You are my mate.” He reached out with one muscular arm and wrapped it around her waist as he pulled her down onto the bed next to him. He tucked her up against his large body.

Chandra gasped at the feel of his hard cock pressed against her thigh. Her body responded to his nearness. A rush of wetness pooled between her legs. It had been so long since a man had held her in his arms like this. And never one as good looking as Sef. “I’m your mate?” She bit back a moan when he stroked down her waist and across her ribs to settle his hand just below her breast.

“Another question,” he said with a chuckle. He leaned in and buried his face into the crook of her neck as he took a deep breath in. “Your scent tells me that you are. I want to be inside you, taking you as mine. I want to hear you cry out as I pleasure you.”

A shiver of desire made Chandra shake at Sef’s words. Oh, she wanted him as well. Right now, her body didn’t care what he was. It just wanted him to put that hard cock of his deep inside her pussy. Pump it in and out of her until she came again and again. Chandra told her body to behave, but it wanted none of that. It had been too long denied to say no to what Sef offered. That she found him devastatingly attractive didn’t help either.

Sef made the same purring sound as he'd done while in lion form as he nuzzled the side of her neck. His tongue came out and licked her skin as he kissed a trail up to her mouth. Chandra's eyes drifted shut at the first light brush of Sef's lips against her mouth. When he took her mouth fully, she gave up the fight. The man knew how to kiss. His lips took hers in a fiery kiss as he pushed his tongue inside her mouth. He tasted like pure sin. As his tongue dueled with hers, Chandra wrapped her arms around his neck and pulled him until he came to lay half on top her body. Never one to hold back after she made a decision, she jumped in with both feet. She'd deal with the consequences, if any, in the morning.

Threading her fingers through Sef's long hair, she held his mouth to hers as she eagerly kissed him back. He moaned as she sucked his bottom lip between her teeth and gently bit down on it. She arched her hips against his erection.

Sef lifted his head and looked down at her with eyes dark with passion. "I want to take things slow."

Chandra took his hand and shoved it inside her shirt, placing it on her breast. "More kissing and less talking. I can think of quite a few other things you can do with your mouth right now besides using it to talk."

She reached between their bodies and wrapped her hand around Sef's thick shaft. Squeezing, she pumped it up and down his full length. As if a damn broke, Sef growled deep in his throat as he pulled her shirt over her head and off. Her pajama bottoms quickly followed. Pressed skin to skin, he shifted down her body as he kissed a trail to her breasts. He sucked a taut nipple deep inside his warm mouth as he settled between her legs. With one hand, he cupped her bottom and lifted her as the head of his cock brushed against her slick opening. Chandra moaned as she tried to lower herself onto his cock, but Sef held her away as he moved to lave her other breast before he sucked it deep.

Chandra dug her nails into his shoulders as Sef continued to tease her. He ignored her and continued to kiss his way down her body. By the time he reached her hips, she panted with need. His wide shoulders spread her legs further apart as he moved lower down on the mattress. He purred as he nuzzled the inside her thigh. At the first swipe of his tongue along her aching pussy, Chandra just about came off the bed. With her hands fisted in the sheets, she arched against his mouth as Sef cupped her bottom and lifted her to him.

The sound of her moans filled the bedroom as he flicked her clit with the tip of his tongue. Chandra felt her core flutter as her orgasm inched closer. It had been so long since a man made her come that it wouldn't take much to send her over the edge. She whimpered as one finger pushed between her slick folds. When a second joined it, moving in and out of her as Sef sucked on her clit, Chandra practically screamed as she came against his mouth.

As the last wave of pleasure diminished, she pulled at Sef's hair until he moved higher up on her body. She kissed him, tasting herself on his lips. With a push, she rolled him onto his back. Straddling him, she rubbed her wet pussy up and down the length of his hard cock to coat him with her juices. She smiled down at him. "My turn to make you come."

She dragged her nails down his smooth chest and across his male flat nipples. Sef groaned as he arched beneath her. Chandra did it again, but this time when he arched up into her, she angled her hips so the head of his cock pressed against her core. Pressing down, she slowly took him in inch by inch. Once she'd taken all of him, she sat up and started to ride him. His thick shaft filled her, making her moan.

Sef took hold of her hips and surged up to meet each of her downward strokes. Her clit rubbed against his pubic bone, causing her body to tighten as another orgasm started to build. Clutching Sef's shaft with her inner muscles, Chandra increased her pace. His cock grew even harder as he groaned. All too soon, her orgasm rushed up

to meet her. On a long moan, she shattered around Sef. Her inner walls squeezed his cock in a tight fist. He rammed up into her one last time, almost lifting her off the bed as he came and filled her with his cum.

Chandra collapsed on his wide chest. Completely sated, she shifted until she lay curled up along Sef's side with her head pillowed on his chest. He held her close as she drifted off to sleep.

Chapter 4

Once he could breathe normally again, Sef looked down at the woman he held in his arms. She was his mate in every way. He liked that she took what she wanted, and hadn't been afraid to use his body to find her own pleasure. It had heightened his own, giving him an intense release that he'd never experienced before. Even now he craved to take her again, but he knew she needed her rest. Dawn soon would be here.

He ran his fingers through her long blonde hair. It felt like silk, as did her soft skin. Sef suddenly realized he didn't even know her name. In his hurry to claim her as his mate, he'd neglected to ask her. He would have to remedy that when she woke up, before he made love to her again.

As his mate slept, Sef tried to once again contact Duau. Still his twin remained silent. His brows drew together with worry. He didn't know what he would do if something had happened to his brother that might keep Duau separated from him. Since their birth, they'd never really been apart. Even though Duau guarded the exit gate to the underworld, as he guarded the entrance gate, they'd always been able to communicate with each other. They truly were two halves of a whole. Along with his worry for Duau, Sef couldn't stop thinking how the gates to the underworld no longer had guards to stand watch. He needed to return to take up his duties, as well as try to find Duau.

He also had to figure out how his mate would fit into his life. As a mortal, she couldn't survive living in the underworld. Unlike some of the other gods, neither he nor Duau had the power to give a mortal immortality. They only had the power to remove the causes of death

of the dead that came to the gates asking to be let into the underworld. She'd have to remain in the mortal realm, and he still had his duty to guard the gate. Something would have to be arranged so they could be together, but Sef pushed that thought aside. He'd worry about that when the time came. Even though they'd made love, she still hadn't told him she would accept him as her mate. That would be something else he'd have to ask her.

A loud beeping sound suddenly filled the room. His mate stirred and groaned. She lifted herself up on her elbow and squinted over at the small table that sat next to his side of the bed. With a grumble, she practically climbed over him until she lay sprawled across his chest and pushed something on the object with glowing numbers. The beeping stopped. With another grumble under her breath, she moved as if to get out of bed. Sef pulled her back on top of him and gave her a sexy smile. "Where are you going? I thought we'd make love again. I still hunger for you." To show her, Sef pressed his lengthening cock against her.

"Forget it, buster. I'm not going to let you tempt me to stay in bed. I have work to do. Work first, then fun and games after it's finished."

Sef let her slip out of bed. Naked, she headed for the bedroom door. "Are you sure I can't get you to stay?" He yanked back the covers and gave her a good view of his fully engorged cock as she turned around.

"Now you're just not playing fair, but my answer still has to be no. I'm going to take a shower now before I get too tempted and change my mind, which will not get the animals out in the barn fed."

As she turned to leave the room, Sef stopped her. "Can you at least tell me your name?"

She looked over her shoulder and cringed. "Sorry about that. I guess you distracted me last night. I'm Chandra. Chandra Marshall. I won't be long in the shower and then you can have it."

Sef flipped back the covers as he watched Chandra's shapely ass disappear out into the hall.

* * * *

After her shower, Chandra dressed in jeans and a t-shirt. She showed Sef the bathroom and how to work the shower before she headed downstairs to make a pot of tea. As she waited for the tea to steep, she thought about the Egyptian god upstairs in her shower. If she hadn't seen him shift out of his lion form with her own eyes she wouldn't have believed it. What she really wanted to know though was how he'd ended up in his lion form in that farmer's field. And why hadn't he shifted to his human form when he'd been spotted.

Never one to eat breakfast, Chandra poured herself a large cup of tea and sat down at the kitchen table as she sipped on it. A little while later Sef came down and joined her. She eyed the kilt he wore and shook her head. "I hate to say this considering how good you look in that kilt, but you're going to need something else to wear."

Sef looked down at himself and then back up at Chandra. "My kilt is not appropriate for the mortal realm?"

Chandra shook her head. "Not even close. Beside the fact it's the middle of September and the mornings are a bit on the cool side here in Ontario, you kind of stand out in the kilt. It'll warm up by this afternoon, but it's a tad on the chilly side right now."

"Then what do you suggest I wear?"

"Jeans and a t-shirt would be good, but I don't have any men's clothes kicking around." Chandra blinked as Sef's kilt disappeared to be replaced by tight fitting black jeans. A tight grey t-shirt now covered his upper body.

"Is this better? I saw a man inside the box we watched last night wearing clothes such as these."

"It's perfect." If anything the jeans and t-shirt made Sef look even sexier. She still couldn't believe she'd actually slept with him. "Are you hungry? I can quickly fix you something before I go out to the barn."

Sef pulled out the chair across from her and sat down. “I don’t require food.”

“Ah. I guess you being an Egyptian god and all you wouldn’t need to eat.”

“That’s correct.”

Chandra took a sip of tea. “Sef, how did you come to be here in the mortal realm? And why did you stay in your lion form until last night?”

Sef picked up one of her hands and held it in his as he rubbed his thumb across the inside of her wrist. “My brother, Duau, and I guard the gates to the underworld. I guard the entrance where Ra enters the underworld at the end of each day. That is why I’m called Sef, which means yesterday in Egyptian. Duau guards the exit. His name means tomorrow. It’s also our job to let the souls of the dead through the gates as well. Since we can open the gates, a group of demons attacked us. Duau and I fought them in our lion forms. We defeated them all except for their leader. He used a spell to send us to the mortal realm. Already wounded from my battle with the demons, the spell weakened me even more so I couldn’t shift.”

That explained the wounds he’d had as a lion, which she knew for a fact Sef no longer had. I guess being an immortal he healed a lot faster than a mortal did. “Being hit with a tranquilizer, the drug that made you sleep, probably didn’t help either.”

“No, it didn’t. Once it left my system I could then shift again.”

“What happened to your brother? Bill and Violet, the couple that brought you to me, didn’t mention there being a second lion.”

Sef shook his head. “I don’t know. We became separated. Usually we can talk to each other telepathically, but Duau hasn’t answered any of my calls. I need to find him.”

“What will you do if you can’t find him?”

“I’ll have to return to the underworld without him. The gates have to be guarded against demon kind. I can’t afford to stay indefinitely here in the mortal realm. I must return.”

Chandra drained the rest of her tea and got up to rinse her cup in the sink before she put it in the dishwasher. Hearing Sef say he had to return to the underworld made her realize she'd miss him when he left. She gave herself a mental kick and told herself to smarten up. They'd only slept together once, and it wasn't as if he'd pledge his undying love to her or anything. Even though he had called her his mate it still didn't mean he wanted to form a long-standing relationship with her. Let's face it, she told herself, an Egyptian god and a mortal didn't stand a chance of lasting for any real length of time. For now she'd just settle for the great sex they had together.

Sef came up behind her and pulled her back so she leaned against his chest. "I sense my mate does not like the idea of my leaving."

Chandra turned in Sef's arms to face him. "How can I be your mate? We come from two very, and I mean very, different worlds."

"You are my mate. You make me feel things I've never felt before. You complete me in every way. The first time I smelled your scent I knew you were my mate."

"You barely know me. I'll admit we hit it off in bed, but the rest, I don't know. I could drive you nuts after a while. My personality sometimes gets on peoples' nerves. I tend to say how I feel, and take what I want. I've lost more than one boyfriend because of it."

"I like that you will take whatever you want, especially when it's me you're taking." Sef cupped her bottom in his hands and pulled her against the large bulge in his pants.

Chandra stepped out of his embrace. "Down, boy. Behave. I told you the animals have to be taken care of first. After that we can have our fun."

"Then I suggest you hurry up. I may not need to eat food, but there is a part of you I hunger to taste."

With her body on fire, Chandra grabbed Sef by the hand and quickly led him out to the barn.

Chapter 5

Sef trailed behind Chandra as she looked in on each of her patients. She had a couple of sheep, a goat and a horse in stalls inside the barn. He watched as she thoroughly checked the sheep and the goat before she dumped some food in the trough set up inside their stalls. The horse had his head stuck out over the open half of his stall as he watched Chandra work.

As they drew closer, the horse suddenly whinnied and reared back as his eyes rolled in fear. Chandra quickly grabbed the horse's halter and ran her hand down his neck as she tried to calm him down. "Whoa, boy. What's gotten into you?" She turned to look over at Sef. "He's normally not so high-strung."

Sef moved away from the stall. The horse quickly grew calm once again. "I think I'm the problem. He must be able to smell the lion's scent and it's setting him on edge."

"You're probably right. Horses tend to spook easily that way. I'll quickly finish with him and then I have to go up to the hayloft and throw down some bales of hay for when I feed them again later today."

"You enjoy what you do, taking care of animals?" Sef asked as Chandra stroked the horse's neck.

"Yeah, I do. I wanted to be a vet from a very young age. I was forever bringing home injured birds. I drove my Mom nuts," Chandra said with a laugh.

Sef fell into step beside Chandra as she picked up the now empty feed bucket and headed to the other side of the barn. "Do you have other family besides your mother?"

“Yes. I have a younger brother as well as my father. I see them when I get a chance, but not as often as my mother would like. They live a couple of hours away. What about you? Do you have any other brothers or sisters other than Duau?”

“No. Duau is the only family I have.”

“Sorry to hear you lost your parents. That must be rough.”

Sef shrugged. “I never knew them, so it doesn’t bother me. It’s enough that I have Duau.”

He stepped back as Chandra started to climb up the stairs that led to the hayloft above. He watched her take hold of one of the bales of hay and take it to the edge of the loft. She then dropped it to the barn floor below. While Chandra had been busy looking after her animal patients, the sun had risen higher, causing the air outside to warm. Sef climbed the stairs to the hayloft as Chandra continued to throw down the bales. At the top, he waited until she turned to head back down to the barn floor before he made his move.

Snaking an arm around her waist, Sef hauled Chandra up against him so they stood touching. “Now that you are finished with the animals I get to have the fun you promised me.”

Chandra opened her mouth to say something, but he quickly cut her off with his lips. He pushed his tongue inside her mouth as he thoroughly tasted her. With a low growl of need, he rocked his erection into her. Chandra moaned as she threaded her fingers through the sides of his hair and kissed him back. Their tongues twined, tasting each other, as Sef walked her backwards away from the hayloft’s edge and into the middle of the stacked bales of hay. Before he laid her down onto the hay, he conjured a soft blanket big enough for the both of them.

Stretched out on the blanket on their sides, Sef lifted Chandra’s leg and hooked it over his hip as he ground his throbbing cock against her pussy. The lion inside him roared, wanting to take his mate. Sef pushed the lion back. He wanted to take his time with his mate. Leaving Chandra’s lips, he moved to her ear. He swirled his tongue

inside it before he took her earlobe between his teeth and gave it a tug. Chandra shivered. With small nips, he trailed his mouth down the slim column of her throat. She grabbed the bottom of his t-shirt and pulled it up to his chest.

“You have way too many clothes on, Sef.”

They both had too many clothes on for his liking. With a wave of his hand, he willed the clothes off their bodies. Chandra gasped as her skin came into sudden contact with his.

She took her bottom lip between her teeth and moaned. “That trick of yours sure comes in handy.”

Chandra shifted lower on the blanket and dragged her tongue along his chest. His cock jerked when she dragged the flat of her tongue across one of his flat nipples before she sucked the small bud into her mouth. With a slight push, she got him to lie on his back. Sef lifted his head to watch Chandra as she moved further down his body. She kissed a path down his abs. She straddled his legs and trailed a finger down his cock. Their gazes met as Chandra looked up at him. Holding his gaze, she wrapped her fingers around the base of his shaft and licked it from base to tip. Sef growled softly and arched his hips.

Pulling her gaze away, Chandra gave his cock her full attention. She swirled her tongue around the head of his cock before she took it inside her mouth. Sef groaned at the feel of her hot mouth closing around him. He couldn't pull his eyes away from the sight of his thick shaft slipping in and out of her mouth as she sucked him deep inside. His cock grew even harder. Sef knew if he let her pleasure him this way for too long he'd come, but he didn't want to do that. He wanted his cock buried to the hilt inside her wet pussy as he came.

Sef soon took Chandra by the arm and urged her to come up his body. He cupped her bottom and stopped her before she could impale herself on his hard shaft. Keeping his hold on her, he positioned her so she straddled his head with her glistening pussy hovering above his mouth. With a purr, he spread her folds and ran the flat of his tongue along the length of her pussy. His purrs grew louder as he circled her

clit with the tip of his tongue then sucked on it. Chandra let out a keening moan. Her hips bucked against his mouth.

Just before she would have come, Sef wrapped an arm around her waist and flipped her onto her back. He spread her legs with one muscled thigh, took hold of his cock and sheathed himself in her moist heat with one stroke. Chandra wrapped her legs around his waist, held onto his shoulders as he pulled back and rammed back into her. Her inner walls gripped his shaft in a tight fist as he pumped between her legs. His pace increased as he rode her harder. Rubbing her clit with each stroke in, Sef pushed Chandra into an orgasm. Her pussy clutched at his cock. Sef fought to stop himself from coming. The lion inside him wanted to take Chandra as his mate.

Pulling out of Chandra, Sef rolled her onto her stomach and urged her up on her hands and knees. He licked up her spine as he moved between her spread legs. With a cat growl, he nipped her shoulder as he entered her from behind. She was even tighter in this position. The lion wanted her fast and hard. Taking hold of her hips, he rammed into her again and again as his climax built inside him. Chandra pushed back on him as his strokes grew faster. She moaned as his hand reached around her and found her clit. He rubbed it while he continued to surge into her. It didn't take much to send her into another orgasm. Sef rammed into her once, twice, before he threw back his head, and with a lion's roar, his cock emptied itself inside her body.

His breath sawed in and out of his lungs. Sef pulled out of Chandra's pussy. Before he collapsed on the blanket, he wrapped an arm around her waist and took her down with him so she lay with her back pressed to his chest. He held her close as Chandra pressed her shapely ass against his now flaccid cock.

Sef didn't know how he'd be able to leave Chandra when he had to return to the underworld. Even though he'd only known her for such a short period of time, he couldn't remember what his life had been like without her in it. She'd become a part of him. He was just

about to ask her if she would accept him as her mate when a male voice called her name from down below on the barn floor.

Chapter 6

“Chandra, are you in here?”

At the sound of Bill calling her name, Chandra stiffened. “Shit, it’s Bill,” she whispered to Sef. To Bill, she called out, “I’m up in the hayloft. I’ll be down in a minute.”

She looked around for her clothes, but she couldn’t see them anywhere. That’s when she remembered Sef had done something to make them disappear. Chandra looked at Sef, who appeared none too worried. In a hushed voice she asked, “My clothes? Where are they?” With a wave of his hand, her clothes appeared back on her body. “Stay here until I can get rid of Bill. He probably is here to check on you, the lion. I’ll have to think up something to explain why there isn’t a lion locked up in the kennel downstairs. I’m sure he’s noticed it’s empty by now.”

Hoping Sef would do as she asked, Chandra stood up and headed down the stairs. Bill stood next to the empty kennel. He gave her a questioning look when she made her way over to him.

“What happened to the lion? He’s still okay I hope.”

“He’s fine. He’s ahh...” Chandra had no idea what the hell to tell Bill that would sound in any way plausible. “He’s ahh...” She then noticed Bill’s attention suddenly become riveted on something behind her.

Chandra turned to see what it could be and swore under her breath. Sef, who had shifted back to his lion form, came down the hayloft stairs and padded over to her. Bill’s eyes grew round as Sef sat down beside her and licked her fingers.

“Are you sure it’s safe to have him roaming around out of his kennel, Chandra? He is a lion after all.” The older man kept looking between her and Sef.

“Oh, it’s perfectly safe. He’s just a big pussycat.” Sef purred loudly and leaned against her leg as he looked up at her.

“He can purr. I always thought big cats couldn’t purr.”

“Apparently this one can.” Chandra jumped as Sef stood up and stuck his nose between her legs. She pushed him away and glared down at him. She swore she could see laughter lurking in his gold eyes.

“Well he seems to like you,” Bill said with a laugh. “And I must say his wounds seem to have healed up extraordinarily fast. You really must have a magic touch, Chandra.”

“I don’t know if I’d go that far, Bill. His wounds turned out not to be as nearly bad as they looked. His fur covers most of them.”

“I’m glad to see he’s doing better. So far no one has reported a missing lion, which is damn strange in my opinion. He didn’t just appear out of nowhere.”

“You never know,” Chandra said.

“He has to belong to somebody. Lions aren’t exactly native to Ontario. Do you want me to start calling around to see if any zoos or wildlife parks would be willing to take him?”

“No!” Chandra cleared her throat hoping to cover her loud outburst. “I mean, no, that’s okay. He can stay here with me. I’ve grown kind of attached to him.” She had stronger feelings for Sef than just mere attachment, but she wasn’t about to say that out loud in front of Bill. He didn’t need to know she’d fallen for a shape shifting Egyptian god. Or that somehow he had wormed his way into her heart after such a short period of time.

“What if no one comes forward to claim him? You can’t seriously think you can keep him indefinitely.”

“Why not? It’s not as if I don’t have the room here for him.” Chandra looked down at Sef as she ran her fingers through his thick

mane. Her next words were more for his benefit rather than Bill's. "It gets kind of lonely knocking around this big place on my own. He's more than welcome to stay here with me. I'd miss him terribly if he left. If I have my way, I'd never let him go."

She pulled her gaze off Sef and looked back at Bill. He wore a confused expression on his face. "Okay, if that's how you feel, Chandra, I'll leave the lion in your capable hands. I'll let Violet know he's doing much better, and about your decision to keep him. Just be careful."

"We'll be fine, Bill. Tell Violet I said hello."

Chandra waited until she heard Bill's car drive away before she focused her attention on the lion that stood at her side. "I thought I told you to stay up in the hayloft."

The lion's form wavered and blurred as Sef shifted back to his human form. He wore the same jeans and t-shirt that he had on earlier. "You had a hard time trying to come up with an excuse as to why your lion couldn't be found in his kennel. I thought if Bill saw me it would make it easier for you."

"My lion?" Chandra stepped closer to Sef and wrapped her arms around his waist. "Are you my lion, Sef?"

Sef cupped her face in his large hands. "Yes. I am your mate, Chandra. Will you accept me as your mate?"

"Yes." She shook her head and smiled up at him. "How can I have fallen for you so quickly, and so hard? I never believed in love at first sight, but it happened when I met you."

"It's because we are meant to be. You were meant to be mine." Sef kissed the tip of her nose.

"What happens now? You said so yourself that you have to return to the underworld. I can't be there with you, can I?"

"No, you can't. I'll think of some way to be with you, Chandra. And I want forever with you, not just one mortal lifetime. I don't have the power to make you an immortal like me, I can only take away the

marks of death from the dead, but I will ask one of the other gods to make you one.”

Chandra started to shake at the implication of Sef’s words. He wanted to make her immortal so they could be together forever. She’d thought herself lucky if she found a man that would willingly commit a lifetime to her, but this Egyptian god wanted so much more. Going up on tiptoe, she took Sef’s mouth in a slow, languid kiss. Against his lips she said, “I know I just had you, but take me to bed, Sef. I want to feel you inside me again.”

With a cat growl, Sef lifted her against his chest and carried her out of the barn. He somehow managed to open the front door of the house while he devoured her with his mouth. After kicking the door shut behind them, he took the stairs two at a time. Inside her bedroom, Chandra kicked off her shoes as Sef yanked the covers down to the bottom of the bed. He placed her on the mattress and only took the time to remove his own shoes before he followed her down.

Angling his head, Sef increased the pressure of his mouth on her lips. He reached up and cupped her breast through her shirt. Chandra moaned as he rubbed a thumb back and forth against her taut nipple. When he moved to kiss along her jaw, she said in a breathy voice. “Do what you did in the barn. Get rid of our clothes.”

“Patience,” Sef murmured against her skin. “I want to kiss every inch of skin I bare, slowly.”

Chandra groaned. “Are you trying to kill me?”

Sef chuckled. “My mate needs to learn how to be patient.” He gave her bottom a smack as he lowered his head and bit her nipple through her shirt. Chandra gasped.

True to his word, Sef took his time removing her clothes. Shifting on the bed so he lay next to her, he pulled up her shirt and kissed every inch of skin he revealed. He drew lazy circles with his tongue. After he pulled her shirt over her head, Sef undid the front clasp of her bra so it popped open. Chandra pulled the straps down her arms. With a rumbling growl, he bent his head and flicked each of her

nipples with the tip of his tongue. Gently, he bit down on one then sucked it deep into his mouth. Each pull of his mouth caused her to feel ripples of pleasure inside her pussy.

His hands worked the button free on her jeans and unzipped them. Sef pulled them down her legs and off. The feel of his tongue caressing her skin across her ribs then down to her stomach had Chandra writhing on the bed. A large hand took hold of her hip and held her down. With his teeth, Sef pulled her panties down past her hips to her legs. Chandra kicked them off. Sef's lips blazed a trail across her hip bones and down to the tops of her thighs. She wanted to scream with frustration when he deliberately avoided her pussy, the one place where she wanted him to touch her the most.

When she would have grabbed Sef by the hair and put his mouth between her legs, he took her around the waist and flipped her onto her stomach. The sound of his purring filled the bedroom as he moved her hair aside and bit her where her neck and shoulder met. Chandra gasped at the pleasure/pain it gave her as he licked the spot with his tongue after he bit her.

He continued to make a trail of kisses across her back and down. At her bottom, Sef gently bit each globe of flesh as his hand spread her legs and his fingers probed her slick opening. Chandra moaned and arched her hips up off the mattress as she offered herself to him, needing a stronger touch. She moaned as two fingers pushed past her folds and sank deep inside her pussy. As Sef plunged them in and out of her core, she squeezed her inner muscles around them. It felt good, but she wanted his thick cock spearing her instead.

She would have rolled over onto her back, but Sef pushed her back down onto the bed. He shifted until he knelt between her spread thighs and sat back on his legs. With a hand on either side of her hips, he lifted her bottom up in the air. Once he had her in position, he slipped the head of his cock into her wet pussy. Chandra tried to push back on him, to take more of him inside her, but Sef didn't allow it. His grip firm on her hips, he slowly rocked into her, not giving her

any more of his length. She whimpered as she squeezed the muscles of her core into a tight fist around him.

Sef pulled free of her body then rammed himself home in one stroke. Chandra moaned at the feel of him filling her to capacity. He was in so deep the head of his cock butted up against her womb. He pulled back again before he rammed into her again and again. With each hard thrust, Chandra felt her climax build. She held onto the sheet beneath her as Sef's hips surged powerfully between her legs.

Suddenly, he pulled out of her and flipped her onto her back. His cock slid back into her body as he lay atop her with his weight rested on his elbows. He took her mouth in a hot kiss, his hips pistoning between her spread thighs. When he had her clawing at his back he lifted his head slightly as he continued to move in her.

"Come for me, my mate. I want to feel that sweet pussy of yours clutch at my cock as you come."

Chandra wrapped her legs around Sef's waist and angled her hips so his hard shaft stroked her clit as it slid in and out of her. Then she was there. With a keening moan, she started to climax. Her pussy clutched Sef's cock in a strangle hold as it milked him. He lifted his upper body on his hands and rammed into her. His pace quickened until he rammed into her one final time as his climax claimed him. Chandra felt his cock pulse deep inside her core as the liquid warmth of his cum filled her. Sef collapsed on top of her. His much greater weight caused her to sink deeper into the mattress. Chandra didn't care. She held him close as she stroked his back. How would she ever be able to let him go?

Chapter 7

They spent most of the day in bed making love. The only time they left Chandra's bedroom was when Chandra had to take care of the animals in the barn, or she had to get herself something to eat. After she'd bedded down the animals for the night both she and Sef ended up in the shower, where they made love again until the hot water ran out.

Now dressed in one of her large night shirts, Chandra sat on the couch cuddled up to Sef as they watched television. Sef wore a pair of pajama bottoms, which were an exact match to the ones he'd seen on a commercial. Chandra had a feeling with Sef around she'd never have to worry about clothes shopping again.

Chandra had let Sef have the remote for the television. She showed him how to change the channels and then let him go to town with it. So far he'd already gone through all the channels, three times.

"Can't find anything you want to watch?" she said as a smile played along her lips.

Sef stopped channel surfing and looked down at her. "Sorry. There are too many choices."

"Why don't we watch this?"

Chandra took the remote from Sef and switched the channel to a movie she happened to catch a glimpse of before he'd changed it. The movie had only started a few minutes before so they hadn't missed much of the beginning. She closely watched Sef as *The Mummy* played on the television screen. His eyes became glued to it as Brendan Fraser got chased by something deep in the sand at the ancient city of Hamunaptra in Egypt. Halfway through the movie

Chandra got up and went into the kitchen for something to drink. Sef continued to watch the movie and only nodded his head when she told him she'd be in the kitchen.

She flipped on the kitchen light and headed over to one of the cupboards. Taking out a glass, Chandra turned back around to get some water out of the cooler that stood in the corner next to the kitchen table. She let out a scream as the glass fell out of her hand and smashed on the floor. A man stood in front of her. His eyes glowed an eerie red. She tried to get past him, but he quickly took hold of her arm in a bruising grip.

He pulled her close. "Where is the lion? Where is the guardian of the gate?"

A loud lion's roar of rage filled the kitchen. Chandra whimpered as the man held her in front of him and turned to face Sef who now stood just inside the room. His upper lip curled back as he growled menacingly at her attacker.

"Let my mate go, demon."

Chandra grew very still as a large knife appeared in the demon's hand. With her held against his chest as a shield, he raised the knife to her throat.

"If I'd known you would find your mate in the mortal realm I would never have trapped you here. I thought you and your twin would find it hard to cope in this realm. I guessed wrong it would seem. But all is not lost. I can put your mate here to good use." Sef took a step closer. The demon shook his head and pressed the knife closer to Chandra's throat. She hissed as the sharp blade cut into her skin. "Don't come any closer, guardian. And don't even think of shifting to your lion form. She'll be dead before you even get a chance to sink those vicious claws of yours into me."

Sef fisted his hands at his sides. "Where is my brother, demon? I know you trapped him here in the mortal realm with me."

The demon smiled evilly. "I see my spell worked. Not only did it work to trap you both, but it also stopped you from being able to

communicate with each other. One of my men has gone to take care of your twin even as we speak. Soon I'll be rid of you both."

"We aren't that easy to kill, demon," Sef snarled.

"Maybe not, but your mate gives me an advantage over you. Mortals are so very easy to kill, so fragile. Just one cut of my knife and she'll bleed to death in seconds."

Chandra whimpered with fear as the demon pushed the knife even closer. She felt a trickle of blood drip down her throat. Looking over at Sef, she saw the muscles in his arms bunch as he fought to keep himself from going on the attack. A tear slipped down her face as she realized Sef could do nothing to save her.

"If you hurt my mate I'll shred you into pieces so small they won't be able to collect them all."

"Idle threats will get you nowhere, guardian. Enough of this chit chat. It's time to make yourself useful."

"I'll do nothing for you as long as you have my mate."

"And I won't let your mate go unless you do what I want. It would seem we're at a bit of a standstill with your poor little mate stuck in the middle." Chandra cringed as the demon dragged his tongue along her cheek. "I can taste her fear on her skin. Nothing tastes sweeter than a mortal's fear."

Sef roared loudly. "I'll make you pay for that, demon. Just as I'll make you pay for spilling the blood of my mate."

"You will do nothing," the demon shot back. "As I said before, idle threats will get you nowhere. I've had more than enough of this."

The demon started to speak in a language Chandra didn't recognize. As the words left his mouth, she felt an invisible power build around them. She saw Sef stiffen as he too felt it grow. When the demon said the last words, Chandra felt the world disappear beneath her feet. She yelled for Sef as she started to fall into darkness. The demon's grip on her never loosened as they continued to fall. Unable to see or sense Sef's presence with them, she started to panic. One part of her hoped the demon had left him in the mortal realm, but

another part of her hoped he'd taken Sef with them. Only with Sef did she stand a chance of getting away.

Solid ground suddenly rose up to meet them. Chandra jolted against the demon and gasped with pain as the knife he'd somehow managed to keep at her throat cut deeper into her skin. When the darkness cleared, she felt her panic subside a little as she saw Sef. He stood in front of a large wooden door banded with metal. With only her eyes, Chandra looked around. They appeared to be in a cavern. Dark rock surrounded them on all sides and hung above their heads. The only light came from the two lit torches placed on either side of the door set into the rock. The door had to be the entrance to the underworld.

Chandra cried out as the demon grabbed a fistful of her hair and pulled her head back to better expose her throat. "Open the gate, guardian."

"And if I refuse?" Sef snarled back.

"Then you'll be mated no more."

Chandra closed her eyes briefly and swallowed. She couldn't let the demon use her to make Sef open the gate to the underworld. She didn't know exactly what the demon would do once he got inside, but it didn't take much for her to figure it wouldn't be good. Desperately, she rolled her eyes in Sef's direction. All the muscles in his upper body stood out in stark relief as the light from the torches played across them. He held himself so stiff she could easily see the thick veins in his arms. A steady growl rumbled out of his chest.

She shifted her gaze off Sef and frantically searched the cavern for something, anything that could help her get free from the demon that held her. She couldn't allow him to use her against Sef. Tears of frustration rose behind her eyes as she realized there was nothing she could use to get free.

Her gaze landed back on Sef. The look of utter hopelessness she saw in his gold eyes shot straight through her. If she could be removed from the equation, Chandra knew Sef would have no

problem defeating the demon. As an immortal, he stood a better chance of survival than she did. And as one of the Egyptian gods that guarded the underworld, he had to be the one to walk away from this. No matter what happened, Chandra knew her life would be forfeit. The demon would kill her if Sef didn't open the gate, and if Sef did, she knew the demon wouldn't just hand her back to her mate. That left Chandra with only one option.

Catching Sef's gaze, she looked at him with all the love she felt for him. Silently, she mouthed the words *I love you* to him. Not wanting Sef to guess at what she intended to do, Chandra ignored the pain on her scalp where the demon held her and took a step forward. With a turn of her head, she felt the sharp knife at her throat cut through her jugular vein like butter. As her life's blood quickly pumped out of her, she kept her gaze locked onto Sef. The sound of his roar of pain was the last thing she heard before everything went black.

* * * *

Sef roared with uncontrollable rage as the demon dropped Chandra's lifeless body at his feet. He launched himself at the demon and shifted to his lion form in midair. The demon struck out at him with the sword that he now held in his hand. Sef didn't feel the pain as the sword cut across his chest. It couldn't compare to the pain he felt in his heart. To have watched Chandra's blue eyes go dull and lifeless as her life ended hurt unlike anything he'd ever felt before. Mad with grief, he struck out at the demon with his razor sharp claws. The need to render, to main, overtook him. Unable to get out of reach, the demon took hit after hit. Sef sank his claws into his legs and pulled him down. With a roar of triumph, he clamped his powerful jaws around the demon's throat and ripped it out.

Slowly Sef backed away from the demon's body. Blood dripped from his muzzle and from the wounds he'd received during the fight.

Numb to the pain, he turned back to where Chandra lay. He shifted back to human form and dropped to the ground beside her. He gathered her lifeless body into his arms and roared. It wasn't fair. He'd only just found her. Tears that he'd never shed before in his very long life fell from his eyes.

He brushed Chandra's blonde hair aside. Her face already felt cold to the touch. Seeing the gaping wound in her throat, he placed his hand on it and used his power to heal it. If only he could so easily restore her life.

Angry over his inability to bring Chandra back to him, Sef called out to Ra. "Ra! Both my brother and I have served you faithfully for centuries. I have never asked you for anything until now. Give me my mate back. She gave up her life to keep demon kind from entering the underworld. That has to mean something to you."

At first Sef didn't think Ra would answer him. Then the sun god's voice filled his head.

I feel your pain, Sef. If I give your mate back her life, I will not release you from your duty as the guardian to the underworld. And your mate cannot dwell here with you.

Sef brushed a kiss across Chandra's cold brow. "If I must give her up so she can live, I'll gladly do it."

I would not ask that of you, Sef. You will be able to be with your mate during the day, but at night you must return to guard the gate.

"As long as I can be with Chandra, that's all that matters."

Then I give your mate back her life, and immortality. Tonight you may stay with your mate, but tomorrow night I expect you to return to your duties.

As Chandra drew in her first breath of air, Sef silently thanked Ra. When she blinked up at him, he flashed them back to her house in the mortal realm. In seconds he had her inside her bedroom. She looked up at him as he placed her back down on her feet and stripped her of her blood stained night shirt.

"How can this be, Sef? I died."

Shaking with emotion, Sef willed his pajama bottoms off his body and pulled Chandra close. “Ra gave you back your life. He also made you immortal. We have forever to be together now.”

Chandra rose up on her tiptoes and kissed him. “Take me to bed, Sef,” she said against his mouth. “I need you to hold me close.”

Sef picked Chandra up in his arms and gently placed her on the bed. He followed her down as she wrapped her arms around his neck and kissed him thoroughly. As he slid inside her body, he lifted his head and said, “I love you, Chandra. I’ll never let you go.”

Chandra caressed his cheek. “I love you too, my Egyptian god.”

As he started to move inside her, Sef knew nothing would ever separate them again. Not even death.

THE END

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Marisa Chenery was always a lover of books, but after reading her first historical romance novel, she found herself hooked. Having inherited a love for the written word, she soon started writing her own novels.

After trying her hand at writing historicals, she now also writes paranormals. Marisa lives in Ontario, Canada with her husband and four children. She would love to hear from you, so stop by her website and send her an email while you're there.



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