

SIREN PUBLISHING

MARISA CHENERY

Egyptian Shifters 4

DUAAU.
THE LION OF TOMORROW

DUAU, THE LION OF TOMORROW

Egyptian Shifters 4

Marisa Chenery

EROTIC ROMANCE



Siren Publishing, Inc.
www.SirenPublishing.com

ABOUT THE E-BOOK YOU HAVE PURCHASED:

Your non-refundable purchase of this e-book allows you to **one LEGAL** copy for your own personal use. It is **ILLEGAL** to send your copy to anyone else. This book cannot be copied in any format, sold, or otherwise transferred from your computer to another through upload to a file sharing peer to peer program, for free or for a fee, or as a prize in any contest. Such action is illegal and in violation of the U.S. Copyright Law. Distribution of this e-book, in whole or in part, online, offline, in print or in any way or any other method currently known or yet to be invented, is forbidden without the prior written permission of both the publisher and the copyright owner of this book. When you no longer want this book, it must be deleted from your computer.

A SIREN PUBLISHING BOOK

IMPRINT: Erotic Romance

DUAU, THE LION OF TOMORROW

Copyright © 2009 by Marisa Chenery

E-book ISBN: 1-60601-306-8

First E-book Publication: February 2009

Cover design by Jinger Heaston

All cover art and logo copyright © 2009 by Siren Publishing, Inc.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED: This literary work may not be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, including electronic or photographic reproduction, in whole or in part, without express written permission.

All characters and events in this book are fictitious. Any resemblance to actual persons living or dead is strictly coincidental.

PUBLISHER

Siren Publishing, Inc.

www.SirenPublishing.com

DEDICATION

For my family.

DUAU, THE LION OF TOMORROW

Egyptian Shifters 4

MARISA CHENERY
Copyright © 2009

Chapter 1

Duau shifted to his lion form just as his twin brother Sef shifted to his. He eyed the group of demons that stood before them. The demons wanted into the underworld. It was Sef's and his job to make sure they didn't get past the gate. They each guarded a gate where the sun god Ra entered and exited the underworld each night to make sure demon kind stayed out.

With a signal from their leader the demons drew their swords. Duau growled as he caught sight of Sef bunching his powerful back legs under him as he prepared for the attack. As Barbary lions they could easily take down the demons with their razor sharp claws and teeth. That they both weighed six hundred pounds of solid muscle gave them a bit of an advantage as well. When they hit the demons they would hit them hard.

As Sef launched himself at the closest demon with a roar, Duau did the same. He brought the demon down and sank his claws in deep as he ripped out his throat. Quickly, he turned to face his next opponent. Slowly the demons fell one at a time until only their leader

remained. Duau circled around him to one side as Sef took the other. Duau ignored the pain from the wounds he'd received, especially the wicked sword cut he'd taken across the chest, as he hemmed the demon in.

The demon's eyes glowed red as he watched them stalk closer. "You may have defeated the others, but I get the last strike."

With his hands raised in the lions' direction, the demon somehow pinned them in place. Duau roared as he fought the demon's hold over him. Sef roared as well as he fought to break free. The demon laughed at their futile attempts at freedom. As he started to recite a spell, Duau felt a chill run down his spine. Once the demon completed the spell both he and Sef would be trapped in the mortal realm, separated from each other. Duau had only enough time to catch his twin's gaze before they both were yanked from the underworld.

* * * *

Darcie Clark pushed open the sliding glass door and stepped out onto her back deck. With a large mug of steaming hot tea in her hand, she went and sat down at the patio table. She took a sip of tea as she looked out across the lake. In places she saw some of the early morning mist that still hung above the water yet to be burned off by the sun. The trees along the water's edge had already started to turn now that fall had arrived, their leaves ranging from rich reds to a burnished gold in color. Darcie loved this time of year because of the colors. It had also been one of the reasons why she'd decided to move up north to the heart of Ontario's cottage country after her divorce. Living on the shores of a lake in Muskoka, Darcie couldn't have asked for anything more. As an artist, the lake and surrounding woods gave her more than enough inspiration to paint.

Lifting her face to the sun, Darcie closed her eyes and took a deep breath in. Today I'll paint outside, she thought to herself. She knew the days that she could work outdoors were numbered. All too soon

winter would arrive and she'd be relegated to the house to paint. Winters in Muskoka tended to be a little colder and snowier than what she'd had to contend with when she lived in Toronto, but Darcie could handle it. Summer and fall more than made up for it.

She lifted her mug to take another sip of tea when she heard a noise coming from the woods at the side of her house. Darcie put her mug down on the patio table and went to stand at the railing that faced the woods. With a hand held to her forehead to shade her eyes from the glare of the sun, she looked through the trees to see what could have made the noise. She couldn't see anything. The noise, a cross between a grunt and a growl, came a second time. Curious as to what made the sound, Darcie crossed the deck to the stairs that led to the lawn below.

Darcie pulled the thick sweater she wore closer around her as she moved over to the wooded area next to her house. As soon as she stepped into the trees she noticed the slight drop in temperature. The sun hadn't risen high enough yet to penetrate the thick foliage. Carefully, she picked a path through the trees, stepping over fallen branches and logs. She stopped when she heard the noise again. It came from a spot a couple of yards away directly in front of her.

Cautiously, Darcie approached the large fallen tree that lay on the ground. Once she got close enough she peered over it. Her heart jumped into her throat at what she saw lying on the ground on the other side of the fallen tree. A huge male lion lay stretched out with its head on its front paws. He made the grunt/growl sound as he tried to heave himself up. Darcie quickly took note of the blood that marred his fur. He obviously was injured, but she didn't plan to stick around to see to what extent.

She took a step back with the hopes she could slip away before he became aware of her presence. Once she got back safely inside the house she would call someone who knew how to handle wild animals and get them to come get the lion. Darcie could not imagine how he ended up in her woods.

The loud sound of a branch breaking echoed through the tress as Darcie took another step back. She stiffened as the lion's head shot up and turned in her direction. His gold eyes locked onto her as he clumsily lurched to his feet. "Oh, shit, oh shit, oh shit," Darcie said out loud as she quickly spun around and took off at a run.

As she wended her way through the trees, she looked back once over her shoulder in time to see the lion jump over the fallen tree in one bound. Darcie heard him coming up behind her as he closed the distance between them too quickly for her liking. When she reached the spot where her lawn began, she put on an extra burst of speed. She just needed to get inside the house before he caught up with her.

Thinking herself home free as she reached the stairs that led up to the deck, Darcie raced up the stairs two at a time. Just as she stepped onto the deck something big and heavy slammed into the back of her. She went down hard onto her hands and knees. A large paw hooked her by the shoulder and flipped her onto her back. Digging her heels into the wooden deck, she tried to inch away from the lion that now stood above her. A small whimper of fear escaped her lips as he put a front paw on her stomach. Darcie instantly went still.

The lion moved to stand straddling her body. He stuck his nose into the crook of her neck and sniffed. Darcie flinched as he dragged his raspy tongue along her skin. She held her breath as she waited for him to sink his sharp teeth into her next. The air left her lungs in a whoosh as he licked her again and then lifted his head to look her right in the eyes. Darcie tried to pull her gaze away, but found she couldn't. The lion's gold gaze trapped her attention. The fear she felt slowly slipped away. She knew he wouldn't hurt her. She suddenly felt the overwhelming need to get the lion inside her house. Darcie knew she was crazy to even think it, but it was something she couldn't say no to.

The lion's back legs suddenly crumpled beneath him and he landed on top of her. Darcie lifted the big head that rested on her chest and saw the lion's eyes were closed. She placed her hand on his chest

then breathed a sigh of relief as she felt his heart beating strong beneath it. When she pulled her hand away it came away coated with the lion's blood. Alarmed by the sight of so much blood, Darcie quickly worked her way out from under the lion's prone body. Obviously he'd passed out from his wounds.

Darcie looked down at her sweater and found it had blood on it as well. She really needed to get the lion inside so she could look after his wounds. It was more of a compulsion than anything. Not that she could really do anything more than clean them up and bandage them somehow. Knowing she couldn't just pick the lion up and carry him inside, she looked from him to the sliding glass patio door. How the hell would she manage on her own to get a full grown male lion that had to weigh a ton into the house? Only one idea came to mind—she would have to drag him inside.

Not wasting any more time, Darcie rushed inside and got an old quilt out of the upstairs linen closet. Back outside, she spread it out on the deck next to the lion and as gently as she could, she rolled him onto it. Then came the hard part of actually moving him into the house. In each hand, Darcie took hold of an end of the quilt and pulled on it with all her might. She managed to move him an inch.

Determined to succeed, she slowly dragged the lion up to the sliding glass door. Out of breath, Darcie sat down on the deck next to him as sweat poured off her. Feeling decidedly overheated, she yanked off her sweater and chucked it through the open door. Once she caught her breath, Darcie stood up and took hold of the quilt at the lion's head. She grunted with the strain as she maneuvered him so he laid half in and half out the door. With another big heave, she pulled him the rest of the way inside.

He was still out cold, but Darcie knew he would wake up at some point. She may be crazy to want to bring him inside her house, but she wasn't that crazy to think she'd let him wander around unrestrained. Racing back upstairs, she snagged one of her wide leather belts and brought it back down to the living room where the lion lay. Next, she

went outside to her detached garage and got the thick length of chain the previous owners had left behind. With her belt acting as a collar, she looped the chain through it and put it around the lion's neck. She then attached the length of chain to her sturdy solid oak banister.

Satisfied that the chain would hold him, at least she hoped it would, Darcie grabbed some clean towels and set to work on the lion's wounds. The one on his chest looked to be the worst of the bunch. Using an old sheet that she ripped into strips, she tied them around his chest and back.

Feeling as if she'd spent an hour working out at the gym, Darcie stood up and stretched her sore back. She caught sight of her clothes and grimaced. She'd done all she could for the lion. What she'd do with him once he woke up, she would deal with it when the time came. For now, a shower was in order. After one last look at the lion, Darcie went upstairs to get cleaned up.

Chapter 2

Duau slowly came out of the darkness that had claimed him. Disoriented and weak, he looked around at his surroundings. He had no idea how he came to be there. The last thing he remembered was chasing the mortal woman who had found him in the woods, of staring down into her hazel eyes as he placed the idea of allowing him into her house inside her head. Then all had gone black.

He shook his head and heard the rattle of a chain. He then felt the weight of the chain that hung at his neck. Duau let out a grunt. The woman had not only brought him inside her home after he passed out, but she'd also chained him to the banister attached to the stairs that led to the upper level. She hadn't completely trusted him after all. He could understand her wanting to be cautious of him.

Painfully, Duau pulled himself up on all four paws. His wounds had already begun to heal, but the deep sword thrust he had taken during the battle with the demons would take longer to heal. It left him still feeling weak. With the need to find out exactly where he was, Duau tried to shift to his human form. A shiver of unease shot through him when he realized his weakness prevented him from making the change. It also made him think of Sef and where his twin could be. Duau knew for a fact the demon made sure to separate them once they arrived in the mortal realm. He telepathically called out to Sef hoping his twin would hear him. Sef didn't answer, nor did Sef answer back after he tried a second and then a third time. His unease increased. Desperately, Duau tried to make the change once again. His loud roar of frustration reverberated off the walls inside the room.

In response to his roar, he heard the sound of hurried footsteps from the floor above him.

Duau's breath caught in his lungs as the mortal woman hurriedly came down the stairs with only a towel wrapped around her body. She held it in place with a hand held to her chest. Her damp long black hair hung down to the middle of her back. He took a deep breath in as she moved cautiously closer. The lion part of him roared as the scent of his mate filled his head. And this woman was his mate. He'd known it when he'd stood above her outside and her scent had washed over him. Duau hadn't been able to resist tasting her skin. It made him hungry to taste the rest of her body, especially the place between her slim thighs.

"You're awake," she said as she came to stand in front of him.

He sensed her uncertainty. She half reached out to touch his head, but pulled her hand back at the last minute. His roar must have scared her. Not wanting his mate to be afraid of him, Duau stretched his head out as far as the chain would allow and purred as he managed to come in contact with her fingers. With each breath out he took the sound of his purrs filled the room. The woman moved a little closer and allowed him to swirl his tongue around her fingertips. She smiled down at him, coming even closer. Duau saw a flash of her thigh through the slit in the towel she had on. Unable to resist, he shoved his face through the slit and tried to lick the seam of her pussy with his raspy tongue. The woman let out a little shriek of surprise as she pushed him away.

"I see I'm going to have to watch you," she said with a smile that tugged at her lips. "I may be thirty-five and divorced with no boyfriend, but that doesn't mean I'm desperate."

Duau grunted, happy to hear his mate had no other ties to another male. Not that another man in her life would stop him from claiming her as his mate once he could shift to his human form. The one quick almost taste between her legs he'd taken had him longing for more.

He couldn't wait to get her beneath him as he sank his cock into her pussy.

The woman backed away slightly as Duau let his hungry gaze sweep her slim body. "You better not be sizing me up to see how many bites it will take to eat me."

Duau didn't hold back the purr that rose up inside him. Oh, he would be eating her, just not the way she thought now. He'd feast on her pussy until she came against his mouth.

She sighed and shook her head. "You're losing it, Darcie. First you take a wild animal into your home and now you're talking to him as if he understands you." She turned around and headed for the stairs. With a quick look over her shoulder, she said, "I'll get dressed and be back down in a few minutes. Be a good lion and try not to tear apart anything before I come back."

As she walked up the stairs, Duau followed her with his eyes until he could no longer see her shapely calves. He settled back down on the floor. He needed to rest. Once he felt strong again he'd make the change and claim her as his mate. He couldn't wait.

* * * *

Darcie ran a comb through her damp hair then pulled on the pair of old sweat pants and t-shirt that she wore when she painted. She went back downstairs after that. The lion lifted his head off his paws where he lay on the floor once she reached the bottom step. He really was a beautiful cat. His gold eyes followed her as she went to stand a short distance away from him. She would have to keep an eye on him. He had completely caught her off guard earlier when he'd shoved his head between her legs and tried to lick her pussy. What bothered Darcie most about it was how that one almost stroke of the lion's tongue made her feel. It had felt good, too good for her peace of mind. That alone told her she'd gone too long without a man in her bed.

That a lion could turn her on with what would have been an innocent lick really showed how low she had sunk.

Crossing her arms across her chest, Darcie stared down at the lion. She'd planned on painting outside today, but she didn't want to leave him alone inside her house. If he decided to start tearing into her hardwood floors, or any furniture he could get in reach of with his razor sharp claws, she wanted to be around to stop him somehow. She didn't know exactly what she would do, but she would come up with something if she needed to. Her gaze swept the lion from the top of his head to the tip of his tail. She knew exactly what she would do today—paint the lion's portrait. Darcie knew the chance of having a wild animal such as him this close for her to paint wouldn't happen again. She didn't do many animal paintings, she mostly did landscapes, but she couldn't pass up on this opportunity.

Darcie went to the corner of the room where her easel stood folded together. She set it up near the lion, making sure it stayed out of his reach. Next, she got a blank canvas and moved the small table that held all her painting supplies beside the easel. Picking up her charcoal pencil, she turned back to study the lion before she started to sketch on the canvas. "Okay, handsome, you just lay there and I'm going to paint you."

The lion cocked his head in her direction when she spoke. Darcie smiled at him then she soon became lost in her work as she started to sketch. It didn't take her very long to get the charcoal outline of the lion onto the canvas. Once finished that, she started to mix paints together on her palette until she had the gold of his eyes and the blonde and dark brown color of his mane perfect. Darcie picked up a paintbrush and set to work.

As always when she painted, the rest of the world fell away leaving only the canvas in front of her and what she painted on it as her sole focus. Sometimes it lasted a few hours or the whole day. Lost in her painting, Darcie would at times be shocked to find the number of hours she'd actually worked when she finally came out of it. Her

ability to shut everyone out while she worked had been too much for her now ex-husband to handle. When her paintings started to garner interest, and then made some sales through a gallery in Toronto, he'd become pissed off with the number of hours she spent working. He'd complained that she never paid any attention to him. At the end of their marriage, he'd given her the ultimatum to either stop painting or lose him. When he'd then said that he had put up with her hobby, as he called her painting, and that he wanted her pregnant within a month as if she were some brood mare, Darcie knew what her decision would be. She knew she couldn't stay married to a man who would force her to give up her dreams.

The hours flew by as the image of the lion took shape on her canvas. Much to Darcie's surprise the lion made a very good subject. He held his position for the most part, only moving his head back down to his paws when he went to sleep for a couple of hours. When he woke up, she felt his eyes intently watching her as she worked.

Late in the afternoon, Darcie put her paintbrush in a jar of turpentine to soak and she stepped away from her easel. She put her arms over her head and stretched her back and shoulders. Pleased with what she had accomplished, she put the easel back in the corner leaving the canvas on it to dry. Once she had the small table put back as well, she turned back to the lion. He still watched her. Then it suddenly hit her that she hadn't thought to give him anything to eat or drink since he'd awakened the first time.

Darcie looked down at her paint stained hands. She would have to clean up first. Turning her attention back to the lion, she said, "Sorry about that, handsome. I should have given you some water at least to drink. Just give me a few minutes to clean the paint off my hands and I'll get you some. I'll also try and scrounge up something for you to eat."

Before she could step away, the lion stood up. Her brows furrowed together as his body started to blur and waver. Then between one heartbeat and the next, a man stood in the lion's place.

And not just any ordinary man. Darcie had to stop her jaw from dropping open as her gaze skimmed over him from head to toe. He was beyond gorgeous as he stood there with his chest bare except for her makeshift bandages, with only a snow-white ancient Egyptian looking linen kilt worn low on his hips. She had to tilt her head up to look him in the face. She guessed his height to be six foot ten, which towered over her five foot six. His dark brown hair touched his shoulders. As she met his gaze, Darcie saw his eyes were the same gold color of the lion's. She lowered her gaze to his sculpted lips and swallowed.

Reluctantly, she pulled her eyes away from his sinful looking mouth and met his gaze once more. "Ah...what...who?" She knew she sounded like a brainless idiot, unable to string a coherent thought together, but how else should she act? She'd just watched a lion shift into a gorgeous hunk of a man. A man that she suddenly wanted to screw until neither one of them could walk.

He smiled at her as his gaze swept down to her breasts. Darcie felt her nipples pebble beneath her t-shirt, the points pushed against the material. His smile widened as he lifted his gaze back up to her face. "I'm Duau." He reached behind his neck and pulled off the belt that she had put on the lion. He let it and the chain attached to it drop to the floor with a thud. He then moved to stand in front of her. His nostrils flared as he took a deep breath in.

Darcie swallowed again at the hunger she saw in Duau's gold eyes, the same look he'd given her earlier when in his lion form. "What are you?"

"I'm an Egyptian god. My twin brother, Sef, and I are the two halves of the Egyptian god Aker, the guardian of the gates to the underworld. I'm also your mate. As for your offer of food and water, I don't require anything except for maybe a taste of your sex, preferably as you come against my mouth." Duau stepped closer so his chest touched the tips of Darcie's suddenly aching breasts.

Maybe it was because she hadn't eaten anything all day, or because Duau overwhelmed all her senses, but whatever the cause, Darcie felt her world begin to spin just before she collapsed against him in a dead faint.

Chapter 3

Duau easily caught Darcie as she slumped against him. He shifted her until he could lift her into his arms. With her cradled against his chest, he went over to the couch and laid her down on it. He stretched out next to her with her body tucked up against him. He trailed a finger down her soft cheek and shook his head. Her fainting had not been what he'd expected her to do once he shifted to his human form.

Lowering his head, Duau brushed his lips gently across hers. "Darcie. Wake up, my mate."

She stirred against him as her eyes blinked open. She then looked around her before she focused back on his face. "I fainted." Darcie said it as a statement not as a question. "I've never fainted before in my life."

Duau brushed a lock of hair off her forehead. "That may have been my fault. I think seeing me shift out of my lion form may have shocked you."

"Well it's not every day a girl gets to meet an Egyptian god who can shape shift into a lion. I think it would be a bit of a shock to anyone."

"Then I'll have to make it up to you."

Dipping his head once again, Duau took Darcie's lips in a slow kiss. He felt her stiffen against him, but as he slanted his mouth against hers, sweeping the seam of her lips with his tongue, she slowly started to relax. He pushed his way inside her mouth and swirled his tongue inside its heated depths as he got his first real taste of his mate. When she kissed him back, Duau couldn't hold back the purr that built up inside him. The feel of her hands on his skin as they

skimmed up his chest to clutch at his shoulders had the lion inside him roaring with triumph.

He increased the pressure of his lips as he sucked her tongue inside his mouth. She moaned as he rocked the hard length of his cock against her hip. He wanted to taste every inch of her skin, but he knew he wouldn't have the patience to wait to take her. After waiting centuries to find his mate, and with the lion riding him to claim her as his, Duau wanted her hard and fast. Later he would take the time to make love to her slowly, to learn every inch of her body with his lips and tongue.

His purrs filled the room as he grabbed the bottom of her shirt and pulled it over her head. He looked down at her breasts. Her taut nipples could be easily seen through the sheer pink lace material that covered them. Hooking a finger in the top of one lacy cup, Duau pulled it down until her rose colored nipple popped free. With the tip of his tongue, he circled the taut peak. He continued to circle her nipple until Darcie lifted her chest slightly off the couch, offering him more. With a low growl that rumbled out of his chest, he opened his mouth and sucked her nipple deep inside. Darcie moaned as she threaded her fingers through his hair to hold him to her.

Duau lifted his head. He eyed the material that covered Darcie's breasts. As if she sensed his hesitation, she reached between her breasts and undid the front clasp. With her breasts now bared, Duau swooped down and sucked the other nipple into his mouth. As he drew on the tight peak, he stroked a hand down her side to the waistband of her sweatpants. With a yank, he pulled the sweatpants down past her hips and legs. Darcie kicked them the rest of the way off.

Releasing her nipple with a small pop, Duau nuzzled her neck as he pulled her panties off her body. He dipped his hand between Darcie's legs and growled with approval at the slick wetness he found there. He pushed one finger and then another inside her pussy. Darcie's strong inner muscles squeezed down around them as he

slowly slid them in and out of her body. Her hips lifted off the couch as she rode his fingers. Duau's cock throbbed in anticipation of being buried deep inside her warm wet pussy. Unable to wait any longer, he quickly yanked off his kilt and the loincloth he wore beneath it. He moved to lie between her legs with the tip of his cock pressed against Darcie's slick folds.

Propped up on his elbows, he held most of his weight off Darcie. He held himself there, unmoving, until she opened her eyes and looked up at him. "I'm going to make you mine now. I'm going to sink my cock so deep inside you that you won't know where you end and I begin."

Darcie took her bottom lip between her teeth and moaned as she pressed her pussy down onto the head of his thick cock. "I can't believe I'm doing this, but God I want you."

Duau cupped Darcie's bottom in his hands and lifted her hips as he positioned himself. With one stroke he seated his cock to the hilt inside her. He moaned at the feel of her tight pussy wrapped around his shaft. He pulled back and slowly pushed every inch of him back into her. Darcie hooked her legs around his waist as he pumped his hips between her spread thighs.

He felt his orgasm start to build. Duau pushed it back as he rode Darcie harder and increased his pace. He wanted her to come first, wanted to feel her pussy clutch his cock in a tight fist as she came. Angling his hips at just the right angle, he rubbed his thick shaft against her clit as he stroked faster. Darcie's fingernails bit into his shoulders as she moaned. "Come for me, Darcie."

"I'm almost there," Darcie gasped. "Harder, Duau. Harder."

With a growl, Duau pounded into her. He felt the inner walls of her core start to flex around his cock. He continued to ram into Darcie's pussy, then he felt her fall over the edge. She gasped and moaned as her pussy squeezed and released his shaft as she climaxed. Lifting her hips higher, he rode her hard and fast until his cock exploded deep inside her, filling her with his cum.

He let his head fall to her shoulder as he fought to catch his breath. Darcie's arms came around him and held him close. Once he could breathe evenly again, Duau lifted his head and looked down at Darcie. Her eyes fluttered open. "Don't go to sleep. Making love to you once has hardly sated my hunger for you." Still semi-aroused even though he'd come, Duau flexed his hips into her to show her he would want her again very soon.

A small moan slipped past Darcie's lips. "Then you better let me up to eat. Unlike you, I need food to keep my energy up."

Reluctantly, Duau pulled free of her body and got off the couch. Darcie's gaze raked over his body. His cock jerked as she stared at it with hunger in her eyes. "I suggest you not look at me like that or you won't be getting off that couch any time soon."

Darcie slipped off the couch and picked up her clothes that lay on the floor where he'd thrown them. "Don't go anywhere. I'll be back down in a minute."

Duau smiled as he watched his mate disappear up the stairs. He had no intentions of leaving even if he could have left.

* * * *

Darcie grabbed her bathrobe out of her bedroom closet before she went to the bathroom. After she used the toilet, she snagged one of the clean cloths off the shelf and used it to clean herself. She grabbed another clean cloth in case Duau wanted to use one as well. Before she left the bathroom, she looked at her reflection in the mirror. The woman who stared back at her looked as if she'd been well loved. Her lips were still puffy from Duau's kisses. Her cheeks had a pink flush. Darcie reached up to straighten her mussed hair, but stopped as she noticed the dried paint on her hands. Turning back on the water, she washed them until she got all the paint off.

Before she went back downstairs, she gave herself one last look-over. She still couldn't believe she'd actually fainted, and then made

love with Duau. It wasn't as if she slept around, and she sure as hell never slept with a man she just met. But with Duau, she couldn't have refused him even if she had wanted to. Yes, she found him extremely attractive, but it was more than just attraction. It just felt right to be with him. As if he was her missing half. Could she really be his mate as he'd called her? Hell if she knew. Right now, she'd take what she could and see what would happen tomorrow.

Snatching up the clean cloth, Darcie headed back down to join Duau. He stood waiting near the couch where she'd left him, still gloriously naked except for the makeshift bandage across the center of his chest. Unable to stop herself, she looked down at his large cock, which stood semi-erect. Darcie dragged her eyes away and walked over to him. She offered Duau the cloth. "There's a washroom near the front door if you want to clean up. There is a shower upstairs, but I don't know if you want to be showering with that wound in your chest."

Duau looked down at his chest and ripped the bandage off before she could protest. Much to her surprise the wound looked almost healed. Only a slight red mark showed where the open wound had been. She also noticed his other wounds were gone. If she had needed proof of Duau's immortality, she had it now in how fast he healed.

He took the cloth she held out to him. "We both can take a bath later." He gave her a look that promised she'd more than enjoy it. "I'll make do with the wash cloth for now."

As Duau turned around and headed for the washroom, Darcie hungrily watched his hard backside flex as he walked away. The man didn't have an inch of fat on him anywhere. His body bulged with muscle. Knowing that she could touch and taste that sculptured body made her pussy ache to have that big cock of his deep inside it. Giving herself a mental shake, Darcie dragged her mind out of the gutter and headed for the kitchen to make something quick to eat. If she wanted to keep up with Duau she would need all the energy she could get.

Chapter 4

By the time Duau returned from using the washroom, Darcie had heated up some leftovers she found in the fridge in the microwave. She watched him walk into the kitchen completely at ease with his nakedness. Not bothering to sit at the kitchen table, she stood at the counter to eat her food. Duau moved to stand in front of her.

In between a mouthful, Darcie asked, “How did you end up here, Duau? Muskoka, Ontario isn’t exactly close to Egypt.”

Duau’s face grew serious. “My brother, Sef, and I did battle with a group of demons that wanted into the underworld. We defeated them all except for their leader. Before we could take him down he used a spell to trap us here in the mortal realm. He separated us as well.”

“So you can’t return to the underworld?”

“No, I can’t. That doesn’t bother me as much as my inability to contact Sef. We have always been able to talk to one another telepathically. I can’t now. He hasn’t answered my calls.”

“I see.” Darcie felt a small thrill at the thought that Duau couldn’t go home yet. She knew it was a bit selfish on her part, but she wanted time to get to know this Egyptian god better. “Would Sef be in his lion form as you were when I found you?”

“Yes. We both prefer to fight with claws and teeth instead of with a sword. Already wounded, the demon’s spell weakened me so I couldn’t shift to human form until now. I would assume Sef would be unable to shift as well.”

Darcie could see the worry Duau felt for his brother as his brows drew together in concern. “Hopefully the demon sent Sef to a less

populated area as he did you. I hate to think what would happen to him if he ended up in the middle of downtown Toronto.”

Finished with her quick meal, Darcie turned away and rinsed her plate in the sink before she put it in the dishwasher. She turned back around to find Duau had moved up behind her. She felt her pussy clench as he looked down at her with hunger in his gold eyes. No man had ever looked at her like that, not even her ex. Duau stared at her as if he wanted to devour her.

Duau undid the belt on her bathrobe and pushed it open. “It’s time to continue what we started on the couch.”

Darcie met his lips halfway as Duau bent his head to take her mouth. His tongue stroked hers as he pulled her against his hard body. His erection throbbed against her stomach. She feverishly kissed him back as one of his hands cupped her breast and stroked his thumb across her taut nipple. With her hands locked behind his neck, Darcie pushed herself closer and moaned. Wetness pooled between her legs as her pussy readied itself for his cock.

She trailed one hand down to his broad shoulder, then across his wide chest. Her fingers brushed one male flat nipple on her way down to Duau’s washboard abs. Skimming down the rippled muscles of his stomach, she reached down and took his fully engorged cock in her hand. Duau was a big man in every sense of the word. He moaned against her mouth as she slowly pumped her hand up and down his hard length. He felt like velvet wrapped steel. Darcie knew how good it felt to have Duau’s cock buried to the hilt inside her. Her pussy wept, her juices running down her inner thighs.

Duau pulled her hand away then lifted her so she sat on the counter in front of him. Shifting his lips to the side of her neck, he said in a thick voice, “I going to taste every inch of your skin.”

Darcie shifted closer to the edge of the counter as Duau licked a trail from her neck to her breast. He dragged his teeth along the tight peak before he sucked it inside his mouth. He paid equal attention to her other nipple until she squirmed against him. With a loud purr,

Duau continued to make his way down her body. His tongue swirled inside her belly button. Darcie held onto the edge of the counter as he sank down to his knees between her legs.

His hands caressed her inner thighs as Duau spread her legs further apart. Looking down, Darcie's breath caught in her throat at the sight of his head between her legs. She gripped the counter tighter as his tongue came out and flicked against her clit. Duau's purrs filled the kitchen when he lapped at her pussy, spreading her folds so he could spear his tongue inside her core. Oral sex had never done anything for her when her ex had gone down on her, but as Duau sucked and licked at her pussy, Darcie felt an orgasm start to build. She panted as he sucked at her clit. Her hips bucked against his mouth when he pushed two fingers inside her body, sliding them in and out of her core. Unable to look away, Darcie watched Duau pleasure her as she tightened around his fingers. Then she was there. With a moan, she let her head fall back as an intense orgasm tore through her.

Duau rose up between her legs. Darcie's gaze fell to his fully erect cock. A bead of moisture sat on the very tip of it. With a finger, she reached out and rubbed it around the head. Duau groaned. He pulled her hips closer and plunged his thick cock inside her pussy with one stroke. Darcie held onto his shoulders as he pulled back and rammed into her once again. The feel of his shaft as it rubbed against her clit had another climax quickly building inside her again. Darcie tunneled her fingers through his hair and took his mouth in a hot kiss. She sucked his tongue inside her mouth as she squeezed her inner muscles around his plunging cock. Duau put his hands on the counter on either side of her hips and pumped between her legs. When her body started to climax, fisting around his hard shaft, Duau pulled away from her mouth and let out a lion's roar. A second later, Darcie felt his cock pulse inside her pussy as he came.

Darcie let her head fall against Duau's shoulder as her breath rasped in and out of her lungs. "I think you're going to kill me, but it wouldn't be a bad way to go."

“I’ve only just begun to make love to you, my mate. I don’t think I’ll ever get enough of you.” Duau picked her up off the counter and headed for the stairs. His flaccid sex slipped free of her body as he took the steps two at a time. “I’ll let you sleep for a little while before I take you again. I can’t have my mate falling asleep on me while I love her.”

Once inside her bedroom, he took off her bathrobe and put her in the bed. He then slipped in beside her. Duau pulled her close so her head lay cushioned on his wide chest. Darcie felt relaxed and contented just to be held in his strong arms. She drew lazy circles with her finger along his chest. “You keep calling me your mate.”

“Because you are my mate.”

Darcie tilted her head back so she could look up at him. “How can you know I am? You don’t know anything about me.”

“One whiff of your scent and I knew you were meant for me.”

“And that’s all that matters? That I smelled right to you?”

Duau chuckled. “You sound as if you don’t believe me.”

“Well, I’ll admit I can’t find anything wrong with the sex, but I’ve already been married once and that didn’t work out that great.”

A loud growl rumbled in her ear. “You are mine now. Even if you still belonged to another, I would have claimed you as mine.”

Darcie heard the possessiveness in Duau’s voice. He truly would have taken her away from her ex-husband if she was still married to him. She snuggled closer to him as she let her eyes flutter shut. She wanted to believe that she could keep Duau as her own, but Darcie didn’t know how a mortal and an immortal Egyptian god could make it work. For now, she didn’t want to think about it. She’d take what she could get. Tomorrow was always another day.

Chapter 5

Darcie awoke the next morning aching in places her body hadn't ached in quite some time. A smile spread across her face as she thought of the number of times she and Duau had made love during the night. He'd taken her in every position possible. They'd even made love in the shower at one point. Duau had stamina that just wouldn't quit.

She reached across the bed and found the spot next to her empty. With a frown, she pushed herself up on one elbow and looked around the room. She was alone. Had Duau somehow managed to return to the underworld while she'd slept? The thought that he'd already left had Darcie quickly getting out of bed as she picked up her bathrobe that still lay on the floor and pulled it on. Darcie didn't want to admit how panicky she felt as she rushed out of the room and made her way downstairs. She didn't want to let Duau go just yet. During the night she'd come to accept him as her mate, the other half of herself. For someone who never thought to love again, she'd fallen head over heels for a man she may or may not be able to keep as her own.

Once on the lower level, Darcie felt her heart drop when she couldn't see Duau in the living room or in the kitchen. "Duau?" She hated the sound of desperation she heard in her voice. "Duau, where are you?" Darcie called out a little louder.

The sliding glass door that led out to her back deck opened and Duau quickly stepped inside the house. His gaze shot around the room. "What's the matter? Are you all right?" He came over to her and placed his hands on her shoulders as he searched her face with his gaze.

Darcie shook her head and took a deep breath in. “Nothing is the matter. It’s just...it’s just I woke up and you weren’t in the bed next to me. I thought maybe you’d found a way to go back home and left without saying goodbye first.”

Duau leaned his forehead against hers. He smiled and shook his head. “I’d never leave you like that, Darcie.” He brushed a kiss across her lips before he moved to stand straight again. “I only thought to let you sleep. My body only requires two hours of sleep. I know you needed much more than that so I got up and came down here so I wouldn’t disturb you. At dawn I decided to sit outside and watch the sunrise.”

She then noticed Duau didn’t have on the Egyptian kilt he’d worn when he first shifted from his lion form. He now had on a pair of jeans and a sweat shirt. “Oh. Where did you find those clothes? I know I don’t have any men clothes in my closet.”

“I managed to work the box in the living room that plays pictures. After I watched it for a bit I realized my kilt would not be appropriate to wear in the mortal realm. So I willed the proper clothes onto myself before I went outside.”

Darcie looked Duau up and down thinking he’d done an excellent job on the clothes. The tight blue jeans hugged his body in the most delicious way. The sweat shirt did nothing to hide the thick muscles on his arms and chest. “The box is called a television. So you spent the rest of the night watching television while I slept?”

He nodded his head. “Mostly. I’ve learned a lot about the mortal realm from it. I also looked at the painting you did of me earlier in my lion form.”

She bet he had learned a lot. She had satellite TV since she couldn’t get cable up at the lake. Darcie could just imagine Duau had a hay day with some of the channels her dish picked up. “Did you like the painting?” she asked reluctantly. Her ex would have probably told her it wasn’t any good.

Duau put his arm around her shoulders and led her over to where the painting sat on the easel. He turned her to face it as his gaze ran over the painted canvas. "I love it. You captured me in my lion form perfectly. I have a very talented mate."

Darcie felt her cheeks flush with pleasure. "I'm glad you like it. Would you let me paint you again? But this time as you are now. Not as the lion."

"Of course you can paint me anytime you wish, however you wish."

A smile tugged at Darcie's lips. "You may regret saying that. I actually want to paint you in a couple of ways then. The first will be of you outside on the deck with the lake as the backdrop." She let her gaze run suggestively over Duau's body. From the heated look he gave her in return, Darcie felt he would be more than willing to pose for the second painting she had in mind. "The second one, I want to paint you nude."

He put his arms around her waist and pulled her to him as he pressed the erection he sported against her. "I have no objections posing nude for you. How about you start with that one first?"

Darcie shook her head and chuckled. "Nice try. Since it's still early enough, and while the light outside is good, I want to paint you out on the deck first. Then later tonight I'll start on the nude. That one may take a couple of days to finish I'm guessing." She'd be lucky to finish it even in that time frame. Darcie had a feeling painting Duau nude she would get a bit on the distracted side. It would be next to impossible for her to see that magnificent body of his stretched out before her naked and not touch or taste it.

Duau sighed dramatically. "If you insist. And here I've been thinking of all the things I wanted to do to that delectable body of yours once you woke up."

It was tempting, but Darcie knew the number of good days to paint outside would be few and far between soon. She lightly smacked Duau's chest. "I'm the artist here, buddy. I decide what I

want to paint. Now let me go so I can put on some clothes. The faster I get dressed and make myself a cup of tea, the faster we can get started outside.”

“No need for you to go back upstairs to get changed,” Duau said. He released her and took a small step back. With a wave of his hand, her bathrobe came to be replaced with jeans and a sweat top that fit Darcie perfectly.

Darcie looked down at the clothes Duau had willed onto her body. She nodded before she gazed back up at him. “Not bad at all. I could get used to this. I hope you don’t mind if I end up getting paint on them.”

“I can always get you more. Now hurry up and make your tea. I’ll move the easel and your paints outside for you while you do that.” Duau turned her around and gave her a little shove in the direction of the kitchen. He gave her a pat on the bottom for good measure as well.

She watched Duau carefully move all the things she needed to paint as she waited for the kettle to boil. So far he was the complete opposite of her ex-husband when it came to her painting. That alone made Duau the better man. She didn’t want to let him go, not even for a minute. But how could she keep him? Their worlds were so different. He was an Egyptian god. He’d live forever. She on the other hand would eventually grow old and die. Duau would remain the same, forever young.

Darcie poured herself a cup of tea and headed outside to the deck where Duau sat waiting for her in one of the patio chairs. He must have sensed her mood because the smile he wore on his face slowly faded away. Duau held his hand out to her. When Darcie took it, he pulled her down so she sat across his lap. He took her cup of tea and placed it on the patio table before he snuggled her against his chest with her head resting on his shoulder. His arms came around her as he held her close.

“What’s the matter, Darcie? Why do you look so sad all of a sudden?”

“I just realized how much you mean to me, Duau. How can I let you go? I think you’ve spoiled me for other men.”

A loud cat growl rumbled out of his chest. He lifted her so she sat up straight on his lap and cupped her face in his hands. “There will be no other men in your life, Darcie. Only me. I’m your mate. I’ve claimed you as my own.”

“Then what will become of us? I know you have to return to the underworld. That you have to find your brother. Can it seriously work? I’m just a mortal and you’re an Egyptian god. Is it possible?”

“We’ll work it out as we go, Darcie. Like you, I don’t intend to ever let you go.”

“I hope you’ll feel the same way when I’m old and wrinkly,” she said in return.

“I would still love you even if you were old and wrinkly, but that isn’t going to happen.”

“Of course it’s going to happen, Duau. I’m mortal, remember?”

“You won’t be for very much longer if I can help it.”

Darcie sat up straighter on his lap. “What do you mean? Are you able to make me immortal?”

“I can’t, but one of the other gods can. My brother and I only have the ability to take away the marks of death from the body of the dead when they come seeking entrance to the underworld. I want you to be my mate in every sense of the word, Darcie. For you to be that you need to be immortal. Besides, I’m a possessive man when it comes to you and I have no intentions of allowing even death to take you from me.”

She swallowed around the lump that had suddenly formed in her throat as Duau spoke. “I’m going to just blurt this right out before I lose my nerve to say it. I love you, Duau. I never believed in love at first sight, or that there is that perfect someone out there for you. But it’s all true when it comes to you.”

Duau cupped the back of her head and brought her lips down to his. He kissed her slowly, his lips nipped and sucked at her mouth until she moaned with her growing hunger. He soon pulled away. “We’re mates, Darcie. We should fall in love with each other the instant we meet. That’s the way it works. I love you as well.” He shifted her on his lap so she felt the hard length of his cock against her bum. Darcie bit back a moan as her pussy tightened in response. “Now hurry up and drink your tea. If you still want to paint me out here you’d better get started pretty soon or I may be forced to change your mind about doing the nude second instead of first.”

Chapter 6

Once Darcie got in front of the blank canvas, she became totally absorbed in her work. In no time at all the likeness of Duau sitting on her deck with the lake in front of him and woods in all its fall glory to one side of him, started to take shape on the canvas. He patiently sat for hours and didn't complain about having to sit still.

When she finally put down her paintbrush, Darcie thought she'd managed to capture Duau's essence. She wiped her hands on a rag as Duau came to stand next to her. "It's basically finished. I may add a few more things to it, but that can be done later."

"It's perfect."

"Let's just say that I'm greatly inspired by my model."

Duau moved to open the sliding glass door for her so she could take the painting inside to dry. He then brought the rest of her supplies into the house for her. "I can hear your stomach growling," he said to her. "You go eat something. I'll wait upstairs for you."

She watched Duau disappear upstairs with her easel tucked under one arm and the small table with her paints easily carried in his other hand. She had thought to have him pose nude down here on the couch, but obviously Duau had other ideas.

After she slapped together a quick sandwich and ate it, Darcie headed up to join Duau. The sight of him totally naked, stretched out on her bed with his hands under his head practically made her mouth water. Her gaze roamed over his bronzed skin and muscular body. She didn't know if she would even be able to paint, let alone form a coherent thought with all that bared flesh within her sight. Duau rolled to his side with his head rested on one of his elbows. Darcie's

gaze fell to his cock, which was hard and full as it stood at attention. Her tongue came out and licked her dry lips.

“Is this pose all right with you?” Duau asked as he stared heatedly back at her.

“Umm, that’s fine.”

Darcie put the blank canvas she’d brought upstairs with her on the easel and picked up a charcoal pencil. Her blood surged through her veins as her nipples tightened beneath her shirt. Her pussy started to ache, wanting to be filled with Duau’s cock. She’d painted nudes before, both women and men, but she’d always been able to distance herself from the male models as she’d painted. The male models had just been a body, something for her to paint onto a canvas. With Duau as her male nude model that wasn’t the case. Her hand shook with longing as she drew his outline in charcoal.

With grim determination, Darcie made herself focus on the upper half of Duau’s body first. As she worked she found herself more attuned to Duau than to what she drew on the canvas. Once she had his upper body finished, she let her gaze drift lower. The air left her lungs in a whoosh as if someone had punched her in the stomach.

Duau had wrapped a large hand around his straining erection. Slowly, he pumped his hand up and down his hard shaft. Her gaze shot back up to his face. His lips were slightly parted as he breathed heavily and his eyes drifted shut as he pleased himself. Darcie felt her pussy clench as her gaze drifted back down to his cock. The sight of him working his thick cock caused wetness to drip from her pussy to soak her panties. She licked her lips as a bead of moisture appeared on the head of his shaft.

Unable to concentrate anymore, Darcie wiped the charcoal from her fingers and moved around to stand next to the bed. Duau’s eyes darkened with desire as she grabbed the bottom of her shirt and pulled it over her head. Just as quickly, she pulled off her jeans. Her bra and panties disappeared as Duau opened his arms for her. She didn’t hesitate to climb onto the bed next to him and slip into his embrace.

With a shove on Duau's shoulder, Darcie made him lie down on his back. She shoved her tongue into his mouth as he claimed her lips in a kiss. It was her turn to kiss and lick every inch of his body as he'd done to her. Moving from his lips, she kissed a line across his jaw to his ear. She swirled her tongue inside his ear before she took the lobe between her teeth and gently bit down on it. Duau purred softly as he pressed his cock against her stomach.

Darcie continued her downward path. She shifted lower on his body, pressing kisses across his broad chest and down to his male flat nipples. There, she sucked each tiny bud into her mouth then dragged her teeth against them. Duau groaned loudly.

His stomach muscles rippled as she licked across his well defined abs. Darcie shifted so she straddled Duau's thighs. She looked up to find him watching her intently with his eyes glazed in passion. With a firm grip on his cock, she swirled her tongue along the head. Duau moaned as his hips lifted off the bed. Darcie swirled her tongue around him once again before she dragged her tongue from base to tip along his shaft. His cock jerked in her hand with each swipe of her tongue.

Opening her mouth, she took as much of his cock inside as she could manage. She closed her lips around him and sucked. Duau's groans filled the room as she pleased him with her mouth. He threaded one hand through her hair, holding her to him as she drew on his cock. She felt him harden even more when she pumped her hand up and down the length she couldn't take inside her mouth.

Soon Duau tugged at her hair. "Enough. I want to be inside you when I come."

Darcie let go of his cock and moved so she straddled his hips. With her hands resting on the mattress on either side of Duau's head, she rubbed her slick pussy along his shaft until she'd coated him with her juices. Duau reached between them and wrapped his hand around the lower part of his cock. Rising up on her knees, she positioned herself above him and slowly took his cock inside her pussy. The feel

of him filling her, stretching her, had Darcie moaning with pleasure. Once she'd taken all of him, she lifted up on her knees again and slowly pushed back down on him. The tip of her nipple brushed against Duau's lips as she continued to move up and down his shaft. He purred loudly as he opened his mouth and sucked it deep inside. Darcie felt the corresponding pull in her pussy as he drew on her nipple.

Her inner walls tightened around him as her pace increased. She rode him faster as her climax began to build inside her. Changing the angle of her hips, Darcie rubbed her clit against his thick shaft. Duau sucked harder on her nipple as her core gripped his cock in a hard fist. Darcie moaned as she fell over the edge into an intense orgasm.

As the last flutter of her climax faded away, Duau pulled out of her and flipped her over onto her stomach. He took her by the hips and raised her up on her knees. With a cat's growl, he spread her legs apart with one muscled thigh as he came to kneel behind her. Darcie felt the head of his shaft probe the entrance to her core. With both hands on her hips, he entered her from behind in one stroke. In this position she could take more of him. As he reared back and slammed back into her, Darcie felt the tip of his cock butt up against her womb. Duau continued to ram into her as his cock hardened even more, stretching her to accommodate him. Darcie pushed back on him with each stroke in.

Duau rode her faster as he leaned over her and bit her on the back of her neck where her shoulder and neck met. Holding her in place with his teeth, he reached around their bodies until he found her clit. He rubbed the small nubbin of flesh as he surged into her. With a cry of pleasure, Darcie felt her inner muscles clamp around Duau's shaft, milking him. A loud growl filled the room as Duau rammed into her one more time before he filled her with his cum.

Their bodies still joined, Duau shifted so he lay spooned against her back and held her close in his arms. Darcie's eyes fluttered shut.

Since she hadn't had much sleep during the night, she let her body relax against Duau and fell asleep.

Chapter 7

Duau moved Darcie's hair aside and licked the bite mark he'd put on the back of her neck. When he'd taken her from behind the lion part of him had joined with the man. The lion wanted to mark her as his mate. Even though he didn't need to sleep, Duau felt quite content to hold his mate in his arms as she slept. She fit perfectly in his embrace. Each time they made love the closer they became. Duau couldn't picture how he'd survived all these centuries without Darcie. The prospect of having to return to the life he'd known before coming to be here with Darcie held no appeal to him. Somehow he'd have to figure out how he could keep Darcie and perform his duties as guardian to the gates of the underworld.

Thoughts of the underworld had him once again wondering what had happened to his brother. They had never really been apart from each other since the day of their birth. They'd always been able to communicate with each other telepathically. The absolute silence bothered Duau. He'd been lucky to find Darcie when he first arrived in the mortal realm. He only wished Sef had been as lucky as he. There was no telling what could have happened to his twin. Duau knew he had to find Sef, and somehow find a way to return to the underworld.

Darcie stirred in his arms. She turned so she lay facing him. With a finger, she smoothed it across his brow. "I hope it isn't thoughts of me that have you scowling like that."

Duau took her finger and nipped the tip of it before he pressed her hand to his chest. "No, it isn't thoughts of you that have me worried. I'm worried about Sef."

"I take it you two are very close."

"Very. We're identical in every way."

"Identical twins, uh? Hopefully when I finally get to meet Sef I don't mistake him for you and grab him where I shouldn't."

He slapped Darcie on the ass. "You better be able to tell us apart or I'll be very insulted."

"I'm sure the first time I kiss him by mistake I'll be able to tell he isn't you." She let out a little squawk as he hit her again. "I'm joking," she told him with a laugh.

"I know. I just used it as excuse to smack that shapely bottom of yours."

"At least you aren't scowling anymore." Darcie kissed Duau's chin. "I have to ask because I've wondered about this. I know you and Sef make up the Egyptian god Aker, but how did you come by your own names?"

"It's simple really. In Egyptian my name means tomorrow and Sef means yesterday. I guard the gate Ra uses to leave the underworld at the end of each night, which is the start of a new day. Sef guards the gate Ra enters the underworld at the beginning of each night, which is the end of the day."

"I get the tomorrow and yesterday now. You're going to have to return to the underworld aren't you, Duau?"

"Yes, but when I do go it won't be for very long. I promise. Once I find Sef I'll work out a way for me to be with you."

"You'd better or I may have to smack your butt."

Duau smiled at her. "Maybe I'd like that."

"Oh, a kinky Egyptian god, are we?"

"I'm willing to try new things."

"Good to know for future reference. For now, let's stick with what we both enjoy."

Duau soon lost the ability to think as Darcie reached down and took his cock in her hand.

* * * *

Darcie found the time she spent with Duau the happiest she'd spent in a very long time. He never criticized her work, never made demands on her. She could just be herself. The more time she spent with him the memories of her life with her ex-husband started to fade. She now had new memories of Duau to replace them.

Somehow she managed to finish most of the nude painting of Duau. It had taken until late into the night since her concentration seemed to fly out the window after a short period of time. It had also been a first for Darcie to paint while naked. Putting clothes on only to have to remove them shortly after she started to paint seemed a waste of time to her. At one point during the night, in between painting and lovemaking, they'd gone downstairs so Darcie could get something to eat. Duau had turned on the television while she'd cooked a meal for herself. She'd joined him while she ate.

They spent the next day outside wandering around the woods or sitting out on the rocks next to the lake. They talked about everything and anything. Darcie told Duau about her first marriage, and how when her divorce had come through she'd decided to buy her house on the lake. Duau told her stories of him and his brother, and what it was like in the underworld.

Now night time, they sat cuddled together on the couch as a fire blazed in the fireplace. The nights had gotten quite cold. The cold winter months set in earlier up north than it did in other places. Darcie had always grumbled about the cold, but with Duau here to snuggle against, she didn't find it quite the hardship she usually did.

When the fire started to burn low, Darcie moved to get off the couch. "I'd better get some more wood from the shed before the fire goes out."

"Do you need me to help?" Duau asked as he followed her to the front door.

"No, I can manage. I'll only be a few minutes."

Darcie slipped on her running shoes and crossed the yard to the shed that sat not far from the house. She could see her breath in the air as she breathed. As she reached the shed she looked back at the house to see Duau stood in the open doorway watching her. Darcie blew him a kiss as she opened the door to the shed. A large stack of wood lay piled against the one wall. She grabbed a couple of split logs from the pile and turned to hurry back inside.

Thinking off how good it would feel to warm up in Duau's arms, Darcie had just about made it to the shed door when a man suddenly appeared in front of her. In the dim light that came from the lights outside, she couldn't make out much of his features. But his eyes that glowed an eerie red had her slowly taking a step back. "What do you want?"

He followed her and sniffed the air around them. "I can smell the lion on you. He has taken you for his mate. I had orders to finish the lion off when our leader didn't return from taking care of his twin, but I think losing you will hurt the lion more."

As the man pulled a sword out of thin air, Darcie screamed Duau's name. A loud lion's roar sounded in the night. Darcie suddenly knew this had to be a demon like the ones that had attacked Duau and his brother in the underworld. The glowing red eyes were a dead giveaway. She tried to block the sword that swung in her direction with one of the split logs she carried, but the demon knocked it easily out of her hands. Just before Duau reached the shed, the demon's sword stabbed her through the stomach and came out the other side. Gasping in pain and shock, Darcie crumpled to the ground as the demon pulled his sword free.

Feeling her life's blood slowly pump out of her, Darcie watched Duau shift into his lion form on the fly as he burst into the shed. With a roar, he pounced on the demon. In a matter of seconds the demon lay dead on the shed floor with his throat torn out.

Darkness slowly started to descend as Duau shifted back to human form and scooped her up in his arms. He raced to the house, but

Darcie knew he could do nothing for her. “It’s too late, Duau,” she barely managed to whisper.

“No. I won’t let you go.”

Duau placed her on the kitchen floor and used a couple of tea towels to press against her wounds. Her body slowly going numb, she didn’t feel the pain. Just before everything went black, Darcie whispered, “I love you” to Duau. The last thing she heard was Duau’s roar of pain.

* * * *

As the darkness engulfed her, Darcie felt herself fall. She couldn’t hear anything or see anything. Then everything came to a stop. The darkness slowly receded until Darcie found herself standing in a cavern of some sort. The only light came from a couple of fire lit torches set in the rock walls. She turned in a circle wondering where exactly she was. When she came to face a large iron banded door she stiffened.

Darcie stepped closer to the man that stood in front of the door. “Duau?” She then shook her head. Now that she had a better look at him, she knew it wasn’t her mate that stood there watching her closely. He may look exactly like Duau, but she just knew it wasn’t him. “Sef?”

Sef looked her up and down taking in her blood stained clothes. “You know Duau?”

“Yes. He’s my mate.”

“What happened? Is my brother unharmed?”

“A demon came. He said when his leader didn’t return from supposedly taking care of you he had been ordered to take down Duau. The demon decided it would hurt Duau more to take me away from him.” Darcie blinked back tears. “Duau said he’d ask one of the other gods to make me immortal. I guess it’s a little too late for that now.”

Sef shook his head. “No, it isn’t. Tell me where to find Duau and everything will be all right. What is the name of my brother’s mate?”

“I’m Darcie. Duau is at my house in Muskoka, in Canada. I’m dead. How can everything be okay?”

Sef smiled. “Ra will make this right, just as he did for me and my mate. Just wait and see. Through you I now can find Duau.” He kissed her gently on the forehead. “Welcome to the family, my sister.”

Darcie blinked as Sef disappeared.

* * * *

Duau held Darcie’s lifeless body in his arms as silent tears dripped down his face. He’d never shed a tear in his life until now. Even though he knew tears would not bring her back to him he couldn’t stem the flow. He buried his face in the crook of her neck and rocked her in his arms.

“Duau?”

Hearing his brother’s voice, Duau’s head shot up. He should have felt relieved to see Sef, but he felt nothing. “She’s gone, Sef. I only had her for a short time.”

Sef came to kneel down beside him. “I saw Darcie. It’s only because of her that I knew where to find you.”

“She’s in the underworld?”

“She’s waiting at the gate.”

“Why didn’t you let her in?”

“Because I want my brother to keep his mate as I got to keep mine.”

Duau shook his head. “I don’t understand.”

“I too found my mate in the mortal realm. The leader of the demons found us and tried to take her away from me. Ra gave Chandra her life back and made her immortal. He’ll do the same for you, Duau. All you have to do is ask.”

“Ra,” Duau called out. “You gave Sef back his mate. I ask that you do the same for me.”

It shall be done, Duau. As I told your brother, you still will have your duty to guard the gate to the underworld. At night you will guard the gate, but during the day you may spend it with your mate. I give your mate back her life and the gift of immortality.

As Ra’s presence receded, Duau looked down at Darcie. She drew in a large gulp of air as her eyes fluttered open. Duau pulled away the towel from her wounds and found them gone as if they never were. He then put his hand over her heart. It thumped strong beneath his hand.

“Duau? Am I really back?” Darcie asked as she looked about the room.

“Yes, you’re back. Thanks to Ra.”

Sef stood up. “I’ll leave you two alone, but I’ll return with my mate tomorrow. I’m sure Chandra will be happy to meet Darcie.” He then disappeared.

Duau picked Darcie up in his arms and kissed her soundly. As he took her upstairs, he silently thanked Ra for giving him back the other half of his soul. Without Darcie, life wouldn’t have been worth living. Now that he had her back, he intended to show her how much she meant to him, even if he had to do it all night long.

THE END

www.marisachenery.com

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.



Siren Publishing, Inc.
www.SirenPublishing.com