



# SATAN'S Temptations

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**Warning:** This book contains sexually explicit content which is only suitable for mature readers. This story has been rated *Total-e-burning*.

# **SATAN'S TEMPTATIONS**

**Brenda Williamson**

## Chapter One

Kinsey watched her prey with the eye of a hunter. She took quiet, unassuming steps, and stalked the clever Ty Serpent. Every instinct led her to the millionaire for a story. She had debated the choice with great care and consideration for what she might suffer. After all, she'd known him before his wealth—before her heartbreak. They'd parted on bad terms, and it had taken a long time to get beyond the concept of forever with him.

"Excuse me, miss?" A voice turned her gaze from her quarry, and she faced a waiter holding a tray of champagne-filled crystal glasses.

"What is it?" Irritable and apprehensive about approaching Ty, she waited for the man's response with impatience.

"Would you like a drink, miss?"

"No." She turned back to check Ty's whereabouts.

He was gone.

*Damn.*

Kinsey travelled the room in search of the man who fascinated her more than anything else she'd ever encountered. She gave a polite smile with the shake of her head each time someone approached with the words barely uttered, "Would you like to dance?"

Two men she'd seen Ty talking to had remained pillars at the entrance to the ballroom. Bodyguards, she assumed, by the brawny build of them. Their presence made her believe he hadn't left.

Continuing her perusing stroll around the guests clustered in all corners of the room, she came to a halt near a large, potted plant. She took a deep breath in attempts to regroup her thoughts. *Just business*, she reminded herself. She wanted the hardcore assignments at the newspaper—white-collar crime, instead of puff pieces on puppies and good Samaritans. The money was better, and if she ever hoped to pull herself out of debt, she needed a higher paying position. Ten years of living on credit had put her in a big sinkhole of financial ruin.

When she had gone to her boss for the umpteenth time about taking on a serious project, she hadn't wanted the usual "No, you're not experienced enough," rejection. So

she'd used the only ammunition she had—Ty Serpent. He was big news. No one had yet gotten close enough to get a good story on him. Rumours tied his wealth to the underworld. It made him fodder for all forms of media. Still, not a single reporter had gotten a personal in-depth interview with him. She would. With her and Ty's background, he owed her.

After Kinsey had gotten past her boss' scepticism by showing him her scrapbook of photos and wedding announcements, she had the assignment. Why she'd kept the mementos of her disastrous relationship with Ty was a mystery, until she saw they were her ticket to a better career. It made her a believer in fate.

"Looking for me, Miss Waters?" The masculine voice sent shivers through her, and she tensed as if she hadn't expected a climax of old emotions to rise.

Ever since dragging that scrapbook out, she'd felt angry, depressed, yet nostalgic. The sultry resonance of Ty's deep voice rang with a familiar sexiness that stirred her desires. The hint of danger in his tone added a new level of attractiveness. What didn't draw her to him?

Kinsey swallowed hard past the large lump in her dry throat that made it near impossible to speak. Now was the time for the waiter to offer her that drink. She felt a surge of regret battering her with valid reasons to run.

"Should I be looking for you?" She took her time facing him, mustering courage from the determination not to let him see her at her weakest moment. While her journalistic palate contained many areas of experience, she felt off-centre of her normal confidence.

"I don't know." He smiled, devilishly handsome as ever. "I did have the impression you've been following me.

"Oh? How very arrogant of you," she replied defensively.

"Maybe I have it wrong. But why else would you be slinking around behind shrubbery?"

"It could be I'm interested in finding a wealthy man for a husband." The retort made her face burn with embarrassment. She didn't want to bring up their painful past. He'd left her because he'd said she deserved someone with money, but if that were the truth, then why hadn't he come back to her?

Ty laughed with loud, hearty amusement. It attracted stares from people who were as far away as the foyer lying beyond the dance floor. "You finally agree after all these years. Money was the root of our problems." His comeback stung.

She had argued she didn't need money. However, he'd said he'd go out and make some, but he didn't come back even when he had amassed a fortune.

Ty's laugh drove home how much she had been right to think he just didn't love her enough to go through with the marriage.

"Let's not rehash the past." He took her hand and swung her into the cluster of dancers. "I prefer to think of the here and now. You're still a desirable woman."

Kinsey restrained the impulse to throw herself into the warmth of his solid body. *Business*, her thoughts repeatedly uttered. *Strictly business. He doesn't want you for anything more than sex.*

The mental reminders didn't help. She moved with him in a slow rhythmic sway to the mellow music. Her attention strayed. It was ten years ago, and she was in love with the most desirable man in the world. His charm, his attentiveness and his sexual passion were all she should have wanted in life. *How had they let that get away from them?*

"Tell me why you're really here." The heat of Ty's fingers pressed into the small of her back, torturing her with an internal heat of building lust.

She instinctively shifted closer, ignoring the danger to her emotions.

"You work for a bigger newspaper, now." He spun her around once and pulled her in tighter. "Am I right?"

He jarred her from the delicious fantasy she had veered into and brought her thoughts back to reality. As a reporter, she questioned his *maybe* unethical business dealings. Rumours were thick about him and his unsavoury lifestyle. He'd apparently acquired a taste for influential people as well as notorious ones, and she wanted the scoop. She assumed having a relationship with him once, might qualify her for the inside story. Now, she was conflicted by her feelings for him, her motives for being there, and the eruption of long suppressed emotions. *How did she proceed?*

"Do you like your job?" Ty dipped her low, taking control of her body, showing her his dominance.

"I love my job." She hung there in the cradle of his strong arms, gazing into his beautiful stare, trusting him not to drop her on the floor.

His strength wasn't his only tantalising feature. Those eyes mesmerised her. His mouth aroused her appetite. She savoured the idea of tasting his lips, nothing long or embarrassing,

just something for old time's sake. A little peck, possibly a brief nibble, anything to refresh her fading memory of how wonderfully he kissed.

"Actually, you're much more beautiful than I remember." His liquor-scented breath fanned her face as he brought her upright.

She'd missed the right moment to take the plunge and press her mouth to his. As he drew her close, she rethought the idea.

"Ravishing is the word I should have used," he murmured.

She blinked, stunned by his flattery. It fed on her hopes that he had considered kissing her, too.

"Thank...you." She stumbled over the words, keeping her eyes lowered and trained on the target of his mouth.

"You haven't changed, Kinsey."

"Oh, why do you say that? I think I've changed a great deal." She lifted her gaze to look at him.

"You're still unable to accept a compliment about your appearance. Tell me, do you still scrutinise every angle in the mirror for thirty minutes before leaving the house?"

Idiosyncrasies. Everyone had them. She didn't appreciate him bringing up one of her quirks. Yes, she was self-conscious about her looks. She was in the news industry. How often had she seen some unsuspecting reporter get their picture in the paper looking the worse for wear? Not her. No one was ever going to see her in public appearing just tossed out of bed.

"There's nothing wrong with taking my time dressing," she answered.

"I preferred the undressing stage myself. Slow and sensuous." Ty's dark brown eyes were as seductive as his commanding voice. The timbre wrapped her in a warm cocoon of anticipation. She had loved their sexual foreplay. The slow stripping of their clothes from each other and the intimate touching as if they had never inspected those same places a hundred times before.

"You've made a name for yourself." She attempted to concentrate on the job aspect of her attendance. "Tell me about yourself."

His quiet laughter tickled her, and she smiled, even though she planned to maintain a detached attitude. His moves on the dance floor had a graceful and decadent rhythm. She felt herself succumbing to the seduction. Guided by the stroke of his hand over her bottom, her

hips gyrated against his. It wasn't hard to think of him sexually. His suave sophistication easily attracted any female ripe for loving. She couldn't recall how long it had been since she'd ventured into a relationship, let alone a casual tryst. But she had a memory like a steel vault when it came to every sexual experience she'd had with him.

"Who is Ty Serpent now that he has money?" She leaned closer, spontaneously attracted to the relief he offered her aching breasts. Pressed to his chest, her hard nipples tightened and tingled, seeking attention. She stared at his mouth, remembering the tenderness of his lips when they latched on and pulled at the quaking points. His nibbles and tugs used to drive her crazy.

"Why don't you tell me?" His cocky grin came accompanied by another wayward caress of his hand over her bottom, squeezing gently.

"You're a womaniser." She lifted a brow, challenging him to dispute the worst of his recent reputation.

"Hmm, yes, I agree." His fingers returned to the small of her back as if to disprove the statement he already confessed as accurate.

"You're ruthless in business."

"Absolutely, otherwise, I'd still be a poor man." His return to improper areas of her body resumed, almost as if he were mindless of the effects it had on her.

She couldn't stop him, not when he swept over all the wrongfully right places.

"And you are arrogant." She capped her list with the worst of his flaws.

"Seems like you have me at a slight disadvantage." He twirled her away from him and drew her back snug against his hard frame. "You know me much more than I ever knew you."

Kinsey glanced at the side of his neck, noticing an indescribable tattoo disappearing behind his ear. If tasteful and attractive, ink turned her on. There was that something in a design that put forth the message—adventuresome. She found the meaning behind tattoos as fascinating as the people who wore them, yet Ty didn't need any enhancements for her to be interested in him.

"I hadn't realised you found me so complicated." She stared into his eyes to see his reaction. Her choice of places to look became a worse alternative to the tattoo. Everything about him distracted her.



"You weren't." His caress skated down her spine.

The sexual chemistry between them heated to the point she had trouble fighting the crazy urge to kiss him. Slightly parted, appearing soft and moist, his mouth had an extremely capable influence over her senses. She blinked rapidly to block the ideas spinning in her head.

While space between them seemed gone, Ty managed to pull her closer, fitting her into a position she'd love better without clothes. His body aroused hers with a distinctive pulse aligned to her lower belly. The throb grew harder and bolder, and once again, he caressed the curve of her bottom, tugging her against his trapped erection.

"What do you say we find a quieter place to talk?" he suggested.

Her nipples ached, they starved for consideration, and she squished them firmer to his hard chest to alleviate the discomfort.

"I'd like that." She fingered his jacket lapel. "Maybe then I'll learn something I don't know about you."

"Like what?"

"Like your darkest secrets?"

He stiffened, and she grasped at the thread unravelling him, the one that might be attached to a good story. They had no future together, so why worry that she hit a nerve.

"What? You don't have secrets?" She rubbed his chest, detecting the flex of his muscles as he took a deeper breath.

"Oh, I have them." His attempt at sounding casual failed.

"Something you might share?" She used his stimulating game to her advantage, wiggling her hips against him.

"Perhaps."

"Only, perhaps?" She pouted, sliding her one hand to the side of his neck without the tattoo. "I think you have many." She stroked his jaw. "Won't you share?"

"Hmm..." His touch slid up and above the edge of her dress so his fingertips met her skin. "I'm sure I can arrange for you to discover one wicked character trait I've not shown you in the past."

Drawn to the sultry tone of his evocative comment, she leant in, set on taking a chance her instincts were on target. *One kiss for old time's sake*, she told herself. What can it hurt? Surely, not her, she wasn't going to fall for him again.

His head lowered, confirming she hadn't imagined him wanting her. She rose on her toes a bit more, trying to close the gap between idea and action. Ty hovered, his mouth within easy reach of hers if she stretched more. Intoxicated by the whisky flavour of his exhale wafting up her nose, she closed her eyes, ready to lock lips and enjoy a memory. He desired her, and no feeling in the world could beat the experience she was enjoying now.

"Kin...sey," he murmured, his breath pushing hers back.

"Yes," she answered softly in response to his yearning tone.

"I think we should... I have something to tell..."

Someone bumped into them and jarred the victory of Ty's confession out of her grasp. She hadn't known how much she needed an apology from him until she thought he was going to say how sorry he was for hurting her in the past.

Ty released his snug hold for a casual one.

"Pardon me," a woman chirped with a drunken giggle.

She shook up Kinsey's whole plan of attack and broke the spell that cut out the event around them. Ty moved away further, letting go of her completely. Then she realised why. The entire room of people seemed to look in their direction. Self-conscious about her situation, her cheeks burned with embarrassment. She considered herself lucky to be the only reporter stupid enough to pay the hefty contribution to get an invite to the dinner. It meant there were no cameramen about to ruin her career by showing reporter, Kinsey Waters, clinging to the wealthy playboy, Ty Serpent, like some airhead bimbo.

Regaining her composure, Kinsey refocused on the matter at hand—Ty's mysterious business success. After noticing him interviewed on television, she had become obsessed with seeing him again. She tried to convince herself it was her journalistic nature wanting to know how he made his money. However, who was she kidding? She was still in love with him. Wanting to find out if he regretted losing her became her priority.

"Someone you know?" Kinsey watched the woman totter away from the insistence of a man tugging on her arm.

"Not really." Ty stepped towards her and resumed his possessive embrace. "You do know I'm the host of this charity event tonight, don't you?"

"Yes." She breathed heavier, feeling his heart beating in his chest. "Could your name be any larger on the placard in the foyer?"

Kinsey didn't mean to sound sarcastic. She had a mission, and it didn't include angering her target. Besides that, she wasn't ready for him to give up the hold he had of her again. *To hell with spectators.*

Ty smiled. "I considered leaving off the event name," he joked. "People wouldn't have noticed anyway. Everyone came here to see me, Ty Serpent, billionaire business mogul."

"There's that arrogance showing again, Mr. Serpent."

"It's the truth." He stroked her arm lightly, making her shiver. "Isn't it why you're here?"

She hated he was right. Who in their right mind paid five thousand dollars a plate for a terribly dry piece of chicken and cheap champagne if it wasn't more than for a meal? She didn't have the details she wanted, but one thing was certain, Ty Serpent made money the way all those around him wished they could—brilliance. He had the intelligence and the confidence to make any venture profitable. What she had to find out was exactly how?

"I'll concede most people have come because they like to be associated with your name. And yes, I, too, had an interest in a story involving you."

"Why didn't you just call my office for an interview?"

"I did. However, I wasn't willing to wait several weeks."

"You could have told them we knew each other. I would have agreed to any time convenient for you."

"I don't work like that. I think people should get by on merit, not the old 'who you know' scheme." She couldn't believe she lied. Telling her boss how she knew Ty was how she'd gotten the assignment.

"Point taken." He nodded. "From your articles, I'm thinking you're not looking for a stock tip or a way to make a bundle of cash in the import business."

"Oh? And what makes you think money doesn't interest me?"

Ty cocked a brow. "The bleeding-heart stories you write."

"I don't think showing great concern for how miserable people are is necessarily a bad thing." Her pulse quickened at the caressing pressure of his fingers near the back of her neck.

"Don't get your hackles up, Kinsey. If I didn't think people needed help, would I be here hosting a fundraiser for displaced hurricane victims?" He offered his arm, and she took it without thought to how powerful his hold could be without effort. She wanted to melt into the warm security of her past recollections.

"It could be you have an ulterior motive." She didn't glance back, but as he led her from the hotel's ballroom, she felt watched, and not by guests.

The ominous sensation wasn't the first time she'd felt spied upon, either. Over the past several months, she'd looked over her shoulder more than once in a day, thinking someone followed, watched or guarded her every move.

With the glide of Ty's caressing stroke, an eerie chill raced along her back. Did his bodyguards trail behind? She didn't see them. Maybe they stayed in the shadows. The recessed alcoves for the doorways were deep enough to hide anyone. Did they already know Ty's direction? Were his actions coincidental or premeditated? Questions continued forming as she walked cautiously alongside him.

"See, you do know all there is about me." Ty interrupted her digressing reflection. "And you're right, there's always something in it for me. I'm not a philanthropist."

He stopped in front of the glass elevator. Her heart made hurried beats, leaving her lightheaded. As if his plans were not obvious, he gestured to the open doors with a wave of his hand and a beguiling wink.

She cleared her throat to speak, to excuse herself from the entrapment of his lust. "Are you leaving the party early?" She stepped back as a precaution against the desire to hurl herself at him. Begging for his embrace just wasn't sensible. The unladylike attack, clawing at his clothes and pleading to have sex would go beyond reasonable. Begging him to make love to her could only end with her feeling humiliated.

"Only if you join me in my suite." He put a hand on the elevator door, preventing it from closing.

A peculiar visualisation of him forcing her into the small area flashed in her mind. Déjà vu ripped like an icy wind through her limbs. Strange dreams about him had haunted her

with a decisive danger of reality and fantasy. Ty never took her by force, but something in her wanted the feral side of him to come out and control the situation.

What was she thinking? Could she live with her heart broken again by the same man? Turning, Kinsey looked at the safety net of people in the ballroom. Her escape stood several yards away. She asked herself the question, did she want to be rescued from Ty Serpent's seduction?

## Chapter Two

Ty waited for Kinsey to decide for herself whether she wanted sex with him or not. Nothing could be more obvious than the look in her eyes. But women had a way of always denying their feelings out of pride. Kinsey had good reason not to trust him. Nonetheless the faint fragrance of her perfume wasn't able to hide the alluring scent of her willing body.

His senses were stronger than ever, and he'd detected the sweetness of her desire the moment she was in his arms. He licked his lips, recalling the flavour of her skin and the taste of her sex.

"It's a little early for you to leave a party you're hosting, don't you think?" she asked.

He smiled at the clever way she tried postponing the inevitable.

"I've got their contributions. That's all that matters," he answered, hoping to nudge her past the point of stalling.

She stared at him with quiet deliberation.

When he'd broken up with Kinsey, the idea was to get rich, get out of his arrangement with the unsavoury elements he'd hooked up with then win her back. Unfortunately, his plans had gone awry. He wasn't as callous as he needed to be, and once he'd discovered the extent of his involvement with the underworld, he couldn't go back to her. There was nothing wholesome and good about his life to offer her. Yet, fearing for her safety, he had managed to keep a close surveillance on her, and just as he suspected, he'd not been able to control the events that bought her back into his life.

Kinsey didn't move a limb, but areas affected by her breathing spoke louder than words. Accented by several long, deep inhales, her breathing pushed her breasts up. Her ivory flesh crested the red garment close to spilling free. He watched for that to happen. When it didn't, he took to studying her nipples spiked against the puckered fabric. She used to wear a small hoop ring in each. Regrettably, the design of the garment made it impossible to detect any signs of the objects. His first mission would be to expose her swollen breasts and see for himself whether she continued wearing the stainless steel jewellery.

"Mr. Serpent." Selena, one of his assistants hurried towards them. "Mr. Serpent, it's time for you to say a few words to the guests."

"Yes, I should thank everyone, now shouldn't I?" He held his hand out to Kinsey. "Would you join me?"

The flicker of her gaze shot from Selena to him. A little jealousy went a long way with women, but he didn't need the advantage.

"Go on ahead, and I'll be there in a minute." He sent Selena away.

Ty took Kinsey's hand in his, never wanting her to think for a moment, she didn't have his full attention.

She inched closer, and the heady fragrance of her perfume acted as an aphrodisiac to his thoughts. Kissing her seemed right, and he leant forward, ready to take what he wanted and what she so obviously offered.

"I'm a reporter, Mr. Serpent. How could I refuse a front row seat, provided I'm allowed to quote you?"

He lifted his head and smiled. "How stoic of you to believe this occasion might be a benefit to your career."

"I use opportunities all the time." She slipped her hand around his arm into the crook of his elbow. "If your offer gets me a little closer to the podium, then I accept."

He walked Kinsey into the ballroom and up to the dais. "I was thinking alongside me," he whispered.

She didn't balk at his decision. "Lead the way." Her fingers tightened on his arm with apparent excitement. Did her job mean so much that she'd fake an attraction?

Ty shook off the horrible concept. His instincts were above average. Kinsey would never use him for a story. *Well, maybe she would*, he allowed, just not to the extent that she felt nothing for him at the same time.

"People will talk." Her sweet breath glanced off his chin as he kissed her cheek.

"I know." His insides quaked again at the idea that Kinsey's personal interest might be pretend, though, he knew that would be best.

Ty sidestepped from her a few inches and turned on the microphone at the podium. "Welcome." His one word silenced the group. "Tonight marks the start of The Serpent Corporation's Storm-Disaster annual charity dinner." He paused for the ensuing applause.

"Because of tonight, we've raised over one million dollars. So, who said dry chicken isn't worth suffering?" He stopped again for the usual clapping and laughter. "When I think of the thousands upon thousands of displaced people after every storm tragedy, regardless whether it's a hurricane, a tornado, an earthquake, or another form of natural catastrophe, I'm reminded how those people would be thankful for one plate of food to feed their whole family. With your help, and by that, I mean your money. We can see that, over the coming years, many of those people don't have to face a single night without a meal or shelter."

The whole time he spoke to the crowd, he stole glances at Kinsey. A knockout in her red dress, she radiated a special glow—happiness. It had eluded him over the years. The anticipation of basking in her bliss had him skipping hurriedly over the flirtation period and moving straight into the sexual aspects of their renewed relationship. He didn't have much time to steal a small amount of joy for himself. Therefore, talking for only another ten minutes, he wrapped up his speech, anxious to resume his rendezvous with her.

"We're all done here." He snatched hold of her hand and tugged her away from the gathering of people interested in personally thanking him for the dinner.

"I can't run in these shoes," she laughed, as he took long strides to get them back to the elevator.

"I could carry you."

"What's the rush, anyway?"

He stopped in the lobby and turned to her.

Panting, out of breath, her smile continued expressing a wonderful enchantment.

"What do you think?" He reached for the elevator button.

"To get away from your admirers?"

"Exactly. How else can I spend time alone with you?"

Her face continued to glow, but her smile dropped into a pensive hold. He let go of her realising how truly rushed he might make her feel. From experience, he'd learned that when pressured, a woman usually balked—Kinsey used to put up a fight over little things to prove she was in control.

Her hesitancy gave him a tremor of regret.



The two men Kinsey had seen earlier with Ty appeared. They eyed her with an approving kind of glare until Ty glanced their way. She watched for any indication he gave them silent orders and saw nothing.

"Kinsey?" Ty held the elevator open.

She debated the consequences. Hot sex could be fun, and he *was* her reason for being there.

"On one condition." She readied with a plan. "You answer all my questions no matter how personal?"

She held her breath waiting for his answer. There was a small chance he'd refuse. Men with secrets weren't very open about anything.

Ty's response came with the wave of his hand for her to enter on her terms.

"Personal, huh?" He clucked a knowing sound. "And here I thought you were interested in my business?"

"I think that's very personal, don't you?"

Silence blanketed the moment and made her uncomfortable. When she didn't budge, he stepped inside the elevator first. She moved into the enclosure with caution and a different kind of fear. Tight places were a nemesis she dealt with every day.

While she'd heard this elevator had one of the most spectacular views of the city, she unfortunately had a teeny-tiny problem with claustrophobia.

"We have a deal, right?" she repeated the last thought in her head.

"You might not like my honesty." His hands landed on her hips and he pulled her farther into the small area.

"They say, 'honesty is the best policy'. I believe I can handle the intimate details of anything you tell me."

"Intimate." He gave a low breathy laugh.

Why had she used that word? He didn't think she meant she wanted to know about other women, did he? How many had he been with? Who were they? The assistant had eyed him like a tasty treat. Had she been one of Ty's conquests?

The doors closed, cutting off one set of worries and reminding her of the one at hand. She moved to the glass side of the elevator. Ty stood behind her as she tried to focus on the spacious outside world beyond. His hold snaked around her waist, under her breasts. Heat

radiated from the pressure of his palm gliding across her midsection. She held the sleeves of his jacket, steadying herself against the dizzy sensation threatening to freak her out.

"You're shaking." He pulled her back against his solid body.

"Am I?" She snorted a strange noise. "Maybe a little," she added, afraid he'd comment on her unattractive pig-like sound. Having him tease or taunt her about anything at that moment, would not help her control the panic rising inside her at an alarming pace.

"Small, enclosed spaces still frighten you?" His arms tightened, and he leaned, putting his face closer alongside hers.

"Yes." She nodded as well, not sure the weak tone of her voice travelled further than her hearing.

"Keep looking out the window. It'll take your mind off the confinement."

His touch slithered around the outside curve of her breasts and drew away. Repeating the caressing action several times made her shiver again. His touch aroused her to the point it shut down the overactive imagination of her brain.

There was no need for a discussion as to what they both wanted. She'd recognised the hungry lust in his gaze from the moment they faced each other. The reflection in the window of the thick-glassed elevator amplified his features.

"You had questions." He rubbed circles around her covered nipples, stimulating the centres into hard crinkled nubs.

"Uh huh." She flexed her fingers at her sides, unsure where to put them.

"What are they?" His handling intensified. A strapless, tube-shaped dress clung to her curves and no bra beneath allowed him leeway in the way he squeezed her.

"What are what?" Her mind went blank.

His fingers looped over the edge of the sex-accessible garment. She writhed at his touch on her bare skin. He jerked the bodice down and her full breasts sprung free. Ty knew just how to handle her nipple rings.

"Maybe you'd like to hold off on questions until later?" He palmed both breasts and kneaded them with light squeezes.

Her nipples rose up between his knuckles, which he used to pinch the rings and tug on her breasts.

"No, I can—" She gasped, halting the way she tried to convince herself she could think and react at the same time.

"Can you, really?" He fondled the ring by flipping it up and down.

She shook her head.

"You've got beautiful breasts." His murmur fluttered a few strands of her hair, tickling her cheek. "I love the fullness, and the silky texture."

"Ty." She put a hand to his face, rubbing his jaw.

He dropped her quivering flesh and slid his hands along her arms, pulling the hand away from his face. Weaving his fingers between hers, he dragged her limbs up against the cool glass.

"What?" He leaned hard into her, and she flattened to the wall. His hips and groin undulated with a rhythmic motion.

"Nothing," she gasped. "I can't think."

"You know what I can't wait to do?" he whispered.

"No." She barely made the word come out.

"Sink my cock deep into you." He kissed her shoulder and buried his face against her ear, whispering, "I miss the way that tight cunt of yours makes me orgasm."

Her whimpered cry rang of desperation. While she anticipated feeling his thick shaft sliding through her wet channel, she really didn't want him to know how anxious she was to be at his mercy.

Ty eased back from where he'd pressed his chest upon her shoulder blades. He let go of her hands and worked his fingers around, cupping her breasts again.

"You know what else I want?" He grasped the rings and tugged them down, forcing a moan from her.

Kinsey shook her head, gasping in response to the growing pressure of Ty's tweaks and twists on her nipples.

"I want to hear you scream my name when we climax together."

"Anything else?" She writhed against him.

"Many things, but let's start with one at a time."

He moved back to her side and forced her forward. Her nipples spiked like steel darts against the glass, and he wouldn't let her withdraw from the chilly surface.

"What do you want?" he asked.

"A story. The public records of your business...oh, God," she wheezed the fragmented thought, attempting to redirect her mind from falling in love.

"What about the public records?" He kneaded the outer regions of her semi-flattened breasts, making her keep them pressed to the cold glass.

They were on the third floor overlooking the street entrance to the building. Anyone looking up could see her sandwiched to the window, her splayed breasts exposed in an unflattering manner.

The elevator began its rise, and Kinsey scarcely glanced at the sight of the city. Her imagination hadn't prepared her for the wild ride Ty took her on.

When she couldn't remember her first question, she tried to resume her quest with another. "You were going to tell me your ulterior motive for hosting this charity event."

"Was I?"

In small circles, he massaged her belly over the crumpled cloth of the dress he had bunched there. The gliding caress expanded and closed in on her dampening thighs. The upswipe bumped the underside of her breasts.

"Yes. You made a deal with—" Kinsey whimpered, forgetting her words.

Ty's strokes ran the rim of her thong.

"Touch me, please." She wanted his finger beneath the triangle of cloth and dipping into her. There he'd discover a surprise.

He stepped back, and she heard him slap at the elevator panel of buttons. A tiny sound squeaked from her throat when the conveyance jolted to a stop. She barely had a chance to drop her arms and move away from the glass for relief from the cold, before he pushed her to it again.

"I intend on doing more than touching," he growled.

Kinsey clawed the transparent wall. She needed to hold something for support.

Ty squatted behind her and lifted her short hemmed dress. The cheeks of her ass quivered uncontrollably, until his face against them shoved her hips forward, and her shaved pussy touched the same icy surface that had numbed her nipples.

"How am I doing?" He licked the question up the crack of her ass.

Kinsey moaned her approval.

He nipped and splattered wet kisses over her bottom. His lips travelled everywhere his fingers led. "I love your ass."

"Generally, a man kisses my mouth before...before..." She lost her train of thought.

Ty twisted her around, and his mouth crushed her pussy lips.

"Very sexy," he groaned, fingering her clit ring.

She'd had it done the day they'd broken up. Never taking it out, she'd worn the thing as a branding to her bad day, and as a reminder, she didn't want sex unless Ty was her partner. Life sucked to be so in love that she briefly turned to celibacy. As the years passed, so did her vigilance, but sex with other men wasn't the same.

He kissed and sucked and brought her to an immediate orgasm with the heat of his tongue arousing the sensitive nerves in her clit. The flicking and licking between her nether lips kept her stimulated. The brush with the clit ring teased a thousand more nerves. In her reverie, spasms jerked her back and forth. Each contact of her warm bottom to the cool glass forced her to rebound forward, driving her onto his skilful tongue.

"Isn't kissing you like this just as enjoyable?" he asked, pressing his wet lips to her lower belly as he shoved her slim-fitting dress higher.

"Not quite," she panted exhaustedly.

He rose up slightly and his mouth covered one of her icy nipples. Like a flame, his tongue whipped over the aching tip, brushing the nipple ring. His actions far surpassed traditional kissing. He nibbled and slurped over her breast until a threaded connection to her inner recesses drenched her thighs.

"I won't give up, Kinsey. Not until you've been satisfied."

His heated breath tickled her skin. She trembled when his tongue pushed aside her thong and parted her. His puckered lips formulated a kissing sound against her pussy.

"Is that good?" He fingered her dripping centre.

Yes. No. How did she answer?

She discovered he didn't require a reply. Aggressively, his mouth fit against her and sucked on her sensitive clit. She shuddered instantly with another mounting climax. Impulsively, she clutched at his dark head. Winding short strands of wavy hair around her fingers, she coaxed him into her throbbing interior.

"Yes," she moaned. "Yes, more."

She yanked at his scalp – snatching and twisting the black hair, as her gushing orgasm gave him something to lap up.

He drained her of energy with his last cleansing gulp.

“Oh God, that felt good.” She slumped against the glass wall.

Ty rose in front of her with a disturbing silence that rattled her. His eyes were shady and vacant of emotion. She put her hand to his sweat-dampened neck and noticed his tie had gone missing. The top button was undone on his white dress shirt.

He ran his fingers over the rim of her ear, tucking back a few strands and holding her head. Dragging her face close, his sex-laden breath hissed against her gasp of excitement as he fit his mouth over hers.

Kinsey tasted a hint of alcohol blended with the flavour of her sex. She savoured the essence as the kiss progressed. Deep and sensual, he stole her breath with wondrous ardour.

She whimpered when his lips abruptly wrenched from hers.

“Undo my zipper.” His words rushed out against her puckered mouth.

Kinsey felt around for the opening to his jacket. Lifting the flap, she blindly searched for his belt, but there wasn't any. Her hunt went lower. The hardness pressing behind the zipper attracted her caress.

She made one light stroke over his arousal, and Ty's moan travelled into her lungs. She hurried and located the metal tab to his zipper as he kissed her with fierce urgency. One swift jerk and she had a gap big enough for her hand, yet Ty's stiff erection didn't fit through the opening. She undid the button on the waistband and his massive cock sprung out of his trousers.

“Mmm...” she hummed her excitement. “I want this in me.”

“Don't worry. You're going to get all eight inches buried into your sweet body.” Ty tugged her dress completely up to her waist. “I'm going to rub that clit ring real well.”

Cool air stirred between her hot thighs. His fingers slipped beneath the thread of elastic, twisted and brutishly snapped one side seam of her thong.

“I could have taken it off,” she exclaimed.

“It would take too long.”

Ty rotated her around, and she faced the city instead of him. He gripped one of her thighs and lifted her leg from the floor. She teetered on one foot encased in a spike-heeled

shoe as he manoeuvred her into place. His cock stabbed the folds of her slick entrance and penetrated her already tightened channel. He threw his hips forward, and his hard thrust lifted her onto her toes.

He expressed satisfaction with a wonderful arousing sigh at which he paused. "You feel so good." The raspy croak of sorrow in his voice surprised her.

He'd broken up with her. Did he have regrets? That was the triumph she sought, yet finding it close to possible didn't give her any joy.

Ty's hesitation ended. He pumped back and forth, pounding her up against the windowed elevator. Rough sex, raw and unbridled did wonders to a woman's self-esteem. She hadn't thought of or had a sexual encounter in quite some time. Ty couldn't have found anyone more submissive and receptive to his animalistic drive than she was.

The cold surface of the glass couldn't cool the heated passion as he imposed the length of his cock upon her. Wide and pulsing with ridged veins, it stretched her insides with each frenzied plunge. He slid his hands up her arms and kept her compressed against the surface.

"You haven't changed," he rasped next to her ear. "Nice and snug like a virgin."

She didn't know what to say. Thank you, felt out of place as he continued his hard thrusts into her. Instead of saying anything, she stood there, acting a cushion for his heaving body while enjoying the benefits of lust.

When Ty slowed, she thought he'd finish before her.

"Please, don't stop," she begged. "I want to..."

He raked her hair to one side, alternating kisses on her neck with hot grunts. His heavy cock dropped out of her and her orgasm stopped just short of peaking.

"Turn around," he ordered.

Sluggishly, she twisted her stiff body. The power in his arms had her in awe when he gripped the cheeks of her ass and lifted her from the floor. She flung an arm around his neck as he hoisted her up. He manoeuvred her onto his cock, and she locked her legs around him.

"Now, I can see you when I give you an orgasm you'll never forget." Ty pushed her back against the wall.

His face glistened with fine beads of perspiration. The gap of his shirt exposed a sliver of his chest, there too showing drops of moisture at the base of his throat. She slipped her

hand up along the collar and rubbed her thumb over the wetness. Her fingers rested over the tattoo and she pushed aside the shirt to see a little more.

"What's this?" She rubbed her fingers over the dark strip of skin spiralling downward.

"My serpent," he grunted, flexing into her hard.

"I was wrong about your arrogance." She stroked the oddly textured flesh, bowing down to kiss the mark.

"Oh?" His thrust jostled her against the window.

"Yes, it's much deeper." She slid her finger over the hard muscles of his chest. "Vanity has given you an inflated ego."

Kinsey tilted her head to the side, angling for his kiss. His wet tongue slid across hers, curling and commanding her responses. Her nipples stiffened, all too eager for the touch of his lips, too. However, she had his mouth, and she'd keep it pressed to hers for as long as possible. This was pure intimacy. A kiss so passionate and deep, that it cocooned her in a spiritual cloud, something far beyond the physical joining of their bodies.

"Kinsey," he murmured her name each time they broke from the kiss for a gulp of air.

The pulse in his neck throbbed incessantly fast—the skin lifting farther with each beat of his heart caused her to speak after her hurried gasp. "Can I see the rest of him?" She stroked Ty's skin, petting the serpent.

"Only if you're going to put your luscious mouth on him again," he nuzzled her face with more kisses.

Kinsey tore his shirt open. Buttons ricocheted off the glass walls and clinked against the tile floor. She gave a brief thought to what she'd once considered an over-used plot flaw in a romance novel. Yet, there she was, enjoying every second of her story-tale heroine status.

"Expensive shirt." He rocked his hips against her.

"We're even. That was a costly thong you ruined." She rubbed over the ink stain darkening his flesh.

On close inspection, faint scales added details to the image. She bowed her head and dragged her lips over the snake's body where it crossed Ty's collarbone. She felt a funny sensation of realism on the surface, but didn't stop her playful pecks. When she drew back and looked again, the serpent's face appeared almost real. The alluring image drew close with a funny pucker.



She kissed the snake's smooth mouth, jerking in Ty's arms as her imagination reeled out of control. He pried her away by grasping the hair at the back of her head.

"Kinsey?" His worried gaze darted over her face and landed on her parted lips.

The brevity saddened her.

"Kiss me again," she moaned, rushing his mouth, moving furiously against it.

She sought that same sensation she'd gotten when she'd kissed his tattoo. That flicker of a long tongue ticking the back of her throat, hinting at the wicked delight she'd get from his tongue fucking her in the same way.

Ty ripped her free of his face and jerked her head to the side under his jaw. She attacked his skin, sucking the sweat-dampened skin, tasting the exquisite flavour of him. Regardless of what her crazy imagination made her think, she slurped over the serpent, following the path it made behind his ear.

The pace sped up. Ty made short, yet hard claims on her body as he drove his full erection deeper. The rings in her nipples made the surrounding area sore from the motion.

"Faster," she begged. "Really hard."

"Has it been awhile?"

"Yes," she groaned, enjoying his body slamming her against the glass.

"Why?"

She didn't want to discuss how her life had been an endless line of nameless men until she gave up trying to find Ty's replacement. Coaxing him with teasing licks to the outer rim of his ear, she bit his earlobe. He rammed into her forcefully, knocking the wind from her lungs.

"Yes," she gasped, encouraging him to take her to extremes.

He twisted his head and caught her mouth with his. Under the fingers she held around his neck, she felt his pulse again. Rapidly throbbing, his skin moved, shifting as if it slithered across her palm. The firmer she stroked the snake, the wilder Ty rocked into her.

Kinsey dug her heels into the cheeks of his solid ass not giving him the room to pull and thrust.

"Is this what you want?" His whole body hammered her to the surface of the glass.

"Yes."

His aggressive mouth collided with hers. He made her lightheaded and yet exhilarated. The grinding of his body to hers brought on the end of her journey.

She clawed his back, riding out the intense orgasm.

"Oh, God, yes," she cried.

Ty released a long, strangled sound into her immobile mouth. Shaking with a series of small tremors, her insides clamped down on his rigid cock. The quick contractions made him jerk against her, pressing her to the window.

Seconds ticked by. Neither of them moved more than the gasping pants forced from them.

"This night was successful for me." Ty's kisses swept from her lips to her cheek.

His abrupt gentleness added to the mystique of his character.

"I should think so since the room was bursting with charitable people."

"I wasn't referring to them." He nuzzled her neck. "I meant you."

"Yes, well, I was an easy piece of ass. I'll do anything for a story."

Ty lifted his head, and his look made her regret her words. She'd not do anything. Giving him the impression their encounter was nothing more than an advantage wasn't how she wanted to leave things between them.

"You were very accommodating." He let her legs go, and she dropped her feet to the floor.

"Don't forget our deal." She weakly held onto him for support until blood flowed into her lethargic limbs.

"Deal?" He stepped back, leaving her in the shaky and somewhat embarrassing disarray.

"My questions answered. Remember?" She tugged her hemline down and the top up over her breasts. "You said you'd answer anything with honesty."

She watched him return his cock to the inside of his trousers. Above the nest of dark curls surrounding his glorious maleness, she thought she saw something move. Curious and daring, Kinsey reached out and touched the tattoo beneath his shirt flap. The cylindrical contour slithered beneath her palm.

"What is that?" She stepped back to the transparent wall.

"I told you, it's my serpent." The corner of his mouth cocked to one side.

She kicked the thong from where it hung on her ankle. The mood changed in the elevator. A sinister atmosphere made her apprehensive.

"I've changed my mind. I don't have any questions I need answered." She put a hand to her chest, feeling the pressure of the tight space closing in on her.

"Hmm, that's too bad. I was rather enjoying our conversation."

Kinsey gave a nervous laugh. She turned and looked out the window. The city lights speckled the darkness far into the horizon.

"You've had your fun. How about we return to the party downstairs?" she suggested.

Ty's arms slipped around her.

She breathed unsteadily, feeling hyperventilation closing in on her rhythm.

"I can't. I have something important to tell you." His embrace tightened.

"What?" Hope renewed in her.

"Damn," he grumbled with a surprised tone.

Kinsey looked up. She stared at Ty's reflection in the glass. Another image appeared right above his shoulder—the serpent peeled from his neck and presented a horrifying reptilian shape with long fangs. She wheezed with a gasp, hypnotised by the gripping fear she had of the looming shadow of the serpent about to strike.

## Chapter Three

Ty cocked his head into the shadowy reflection and struck his bite at Kinsey's neck. He sunk his fangs into her flesh, missing the artery by a millimetre. She thrashed in his embrace, a prey to his lust and a victim to his darkened soul. Within a minute, the last spasms of shock jolted from her, and she slumped into a ragdoll state of paralysis.

"And that, my love, *is* my darkest secret," he whispered against her head as he scooped up her limp body and held her gently against him.

She stared at him through glassy violet eyes. The venom of the serpent rendered her immobile, not unconscious. Her expressionless gaze gave him no hint to whether she experienced pain or fear or both. He had hoped to spare her from the gruesome characteristics of his primeval instincts. Yet, he should have known, when Kinsey showed up at the dinner, she'd not escape the snake.

"What are you thinking, Kinsey?" He pushed the elevator button. "If it were me, I should think I'd wish I hadn't come here tonight. I tried to prevent this day from happening. Sometimes, it really is better to leave the past where it belongs – me, out of your life."

The elevator doors opened on the top floor into a small hall with four suites. They were all his. He required privacy, and with his wealth, he could afford it.

He carried Kinsey into the largest suite, the one he'd called home for many years. Nothing about the place made it cosy or inviting, he'd made sure of that by not bringing anything personal into the picture. Everything from his past with Kinsey, he kept in a storage warehouse.

Ty walked across the sitting room, aiming for the bedroom.

"You should be safe in here." He laid her on the hotel's gold signature satin bedspread.

The impersonal cover transformed before his eyes. Kinsey's added beauty fit the opulence of his life and made the bed more inviting than he'd ever imagined. Every curve on her had a masterful attraction enticing his touch. Sliding his finger over the top swell of one succulent breast, he trailed downward over the dress to the hem bunched at her thighs. He

anticipated a twitch or a quiver and got nothing aside from a faint pulse beneath her delicate skin.

"You were exceptional tonight." He ran his hand over her silky skin. "No one has ever excited me the way you do. I lost control of my senses the moment I saw you in the hotel. Obviously, I tried to avoid running into you and failed. Now, you'll have to trust me. This is for the best."

He sat on the edge of the bed and studied her face. Porcelain textured, her skin had a perfect sheen. He used to enjoy waking up and seeing her in bed with him, sleeping like an expensive doll made just for him. Passionate and playful, she had filled his life with awe. Lack of money had become their downfall—the bane of their lives. They'd argued too much about bills, and he hadn't seen them moving out of that rut with the jobs they'd had.

"I have a few errands to handle." He stood up and went to the closet to get another shirt. "I shouldn't be long."

He took off his jacket and laid it neatly on the end of the bed. Removing his ruined shirt, he watched Kinsey, wishing he hadn't spoilt things between them.

"You're the hottest woman I've known. If things were different, I'd be in that bed with you. If I had life to do differently, I would appreciate your intelligence and your love and let it be enough."

He ran a hand around the top of her foot and noticed her one shoe missing. Inspecting the floor, he saw the red, thin-heeled stiletto pump by the doorway. He retrieved it and walked back to the bed. The reflection in the mirror caught his attention.

For a few seconds, he stared at himself. The snake coiling his body moved. It slid up and down over his abdomen and around to his back. Slithering against his flesh, the soul-stealing serpent took on a three dimensional shape. Just like in the elevator, the reptile morphed over his face so the only reflection he stared at in the mirror was his transformation.

He opened his mouth, and his forked tongue flicked the reflective glass. Memories of Kinsey's kiss spellbound him as her image appeared. She leant forward and kissed him with a provocative caress over his lips.

*"Use me," she murmured. "I'm yours to sacrifice."*

Ty put his hand to her face, finding it cool and impersonal. "I ca-can't." He stammered, resisting her plea.

*"Who else but your one love can give you more?"*

Ty closed his eyes. "No, stop," he demanded.

Slamming his hand against the mirror, he looked into it again. "What was I thinking?" He balled up the damaged shirt and threw it on the closet floor.

For ten years, Ty lived with the devil's serpent guiding his every conscious move. He'd sold himself to the ruler of hell for the riches of the world, and he'd paid the price with his soul. He despised the symbol of his greed and what it had represented. Worse, he hated how his fall into the evilness of hell inadvertently involved Kinsey. Her success was because of him. Her downfall would be his as well unless he could break his deal with the devil.

Jerking the clean blue shirt up his arms, he kept watch of Kinsey. She lay beautifully in wait for him. Ironically, with her golden-blond hair fanned over the pillow, she presented an angelic illusion to his demon-bought bed. The vivacious woman gave him a glimmer of what a different life might have been like.

Ty walked closer to her. Barely a breath stirred her limp form. He clenched his jaw, angered by the outcome of their reunion.

"You may think this was cruel and sadistic of me, but it was necessary." He leant over and kissed her unresponsive lips. "Forgive me, Kinsey."

Ty left the apartment with a plan to make an appearance at the party downstairs and let people see him. Then he'd handle other matters regarding Kinsey. He knew just what he had to do to fix his mistakes.

In the elevator, he glanced at the floor. Kinsey's thong lay there as a reminder of his weakness. He picked up the flimsy bit of cloth and pressed the little triangle patch of fabric to his nose. He inhaled the fragrance of her. It aroused him instantly. Everything about the woman did. With not much use other than retaining a sentimental value like a token from his conquest, he tucked it in his pocket.

The elevator doors opened, and a wave of music surrounded him.

"There you are, Ty." His brother came towards him. "Didn't I see you leave with a gorgeous blonde? She looked a lot like Kinsey."

Larson leaned past him and peeked inside the elevator as if Kinsey were hiding.

"I was dancing with a blonde, but I didn't leave with her." Ty brushed a hand over his pale blue shirt. "Remember, I was wearing a white shirt. Well, I spilled wine on it and had to change."

"That blue shirt doesn't go with your tie."

Ty fingered the dark purple piece of silk. "I wasn't thinking when I grabbed it." He put a hand on Larson's shoulder and steered him to the ballroom.

For the length of time Ty spent in the devil's custody, he'd managed to keep his brother in the dark, and he planned to do so until he died.

"So tell me, what lady has caught your interest tonight?" Ty gazed around the room in an attempt to spot the devil's minions.

They were everywhere, waiting in corners, doorways and near exits. He never questioned how many were like him because he didn't want to know.

"There's a looker." Larson nudged his arm. "Maybe I can spirit her away from that old guy she's hanging onto. Money has to be the reason she's with him."

As Larson turned his head to look elsewhere, weighing his options for hooking up with a beauty for the night, Ty kept his sights on the old man. That fellow's senses were keen. He looked at Ty and winked.

"What do you think?" Larson asked.

"Not her." He took a deep breath. "Her fate is sealed."

"What?"

Ty put a hand to his brother's shoulder. "Didn't you see the ring on her left hand? She's married," he lied quickly.

"Oh, well, I'll find another."

Larson wandered off in search of his dream girl. Ty didn't have time to watch and make sure his next choice wasn't claimed by the devil. He had his own mess to handle. Just where to start eluded him.

\* \* \* \*

The sound of a door closing alerted Kinsey to Ty's departure.

Forgive him, he asked her. *That'll be a cold day in hell.*

Her fears escalated. Unable to move, she saw the ceiling and a slight peripheral vision of one wall—nothing else. She waited for another sound or a voice. When she felt a gentle touch to her foot, her heart nearly stopped. A light pressure tickled her ankle, her knee, and then between her thighs.

Moving seemed a natural reaction she should be able to accomplish, but ever since her hallucination of a snake and Ty biting her had turned real, she hadn't been able to make even one finger bend.

"He shouldn't have left you," a voice whispered. "Alone and vulnerable, you're utterly helpless against anything I might want to do."

Kinsey managed to turn her head an inch. *Who's there?* She couldn't speak, but it didn't stop the questions from bouncing in her head.

"Hmm... you are a tasty treat." A man sprung up from the end of the bed, staring at her from between her legs.

*What have you done to me?* She stared at him, her lips stiff, and her mind rioting with uncertainty.

"You are very soft," he leant closer.

No. Just because she felt something touch her skin didn't mean he fondled her.

He lowered his head, disappearing from her line of sight. When he rose up, his tongue whipped in a complete circle of his mouth like a cat savouring stolen cream.

Repulsed by the thought of this stranger taking advantage, she tried to focus on something else. The gleam in his eye stopped her from mentally wandering away. His plans were set in a cold stare. He planned to rape her.

Kinsey felt the shiver of fear inside her. The gripping intensity of paralysis made it worse. Yet, when he crawled over her and lowered his weight onto her, she felt the heaviness of him pressing her into the mattress.

*Where had she seen him before?*

"I told him you'd be ready for the ceremony if you couldn't move on your own."

*What ceremony?*

He rubbed a finger over her lips.

*Yes, I feel it.*

"Hmmm, you blinked." He stroked her cheek.



*Did I? I didn't notice.* Of all things, Kinsey wanted to cry in frustration.

"You have a delicious mouth, sure to please any man. Did Ty enjoy your kiss?" He pushed his fingers between her teeth and stretched her mouth open.

Kinsey's stomach rumbled with abhorrence as his other hand squeezed her breast. She worked at hating Ty for leaving her to be molested.

"I know I should wait for later, take my turn at the ceremony, but you're irresistible." She felt her nipple ring move as he kissed her.

"What the hell are you doing?" Ty's angry voice thundered, making Kinsey's insides jolt.

The stranger flew off her as if a strong gust of wind had a firm grip on his back. A prickling of pain stung her bottom lip.

"How did you get into my suite?" Ty demanded, partly redeeming himself by rescuing her.

"You didn't lock the door," the creep grumbled. "You can only keep her to yourself for so long, you know. Tonight, at the ceremony, she'll be...shall we say, fresh meat before the sacrifice."

"Get out," Ty yelled. "And stay out!"

A door thudding shut meant the disgusting man had left the suite.

She watched Ty rub his neck. He appeared agitated. Yet, what right did he have to be upset? Whatever his plans, it sounded as if she were going to be used by a multitude of men at a ceremony before killing her.

"I'm sorry, Kinsey." He sat on the side of the bed and pulled her up, tugging her dress back into place.

She flopped forward against him within his embrace, lacking the use of her muscles.

He stroked a hand over her head and kissed into her hair. "He had no right to touch you."

She didn't want to believe kindness from her kidnapper, except the tone in his voice carried a lot of angst.

He leaned her back in the sling of his arm and slid two fingers over her lips. When he moved them away, she saw blood. Hers, she imagined by the sting to her lip. Ty licked it off his skin and touched her cheek.

"I can only do so much to protect you." He laid her down and got up.

His pace back and forth alongside the bed worried her.

*Protect*, she scoffed. He was the reason she lay vulnerable.

"I don't know if I can get you out of this."

*Out of what?* She wished her voice worked.

"I have one more thing to take care of then I can stay with you until the end."

*End?* The questions mounted. Was that stranger really serious about a ceremony?

Ty tipped her head back. Ever commanding, he plied her with the one-sided kiss. Through to her toes, she felt the power in his lips oscillating over hers. Firm, yet gentle, sweet, and still passionate. He confused her, especially when she detected tears dripping from his cheeks onto hers.

Kinsey didn't try to move. Her trust in him had waned. Until she knew what he had planned, she'd keep pretending to be incapable of escape.

"I'm sorry, honey." He laid her on the bed.

Her heart lurched at the sound of his voice against her ear.

He got up from the bed. Shaking his head, he frowned. His expression appeared grim, and she couldn't imagine what he had intended to do to her.

Again, he left her in the room alone. Immediately, she worked at moving from the bed. Her limbs operated stiffly.

"Damn." She swore as she fell to the floor, surprised the sound of her voice. "That son-of-a-bitch will be sorry."

Crawling on hands and knees, she retrieved her shoes and headed out of the bedroom in search of the exit. The mirror grabbed her attention and she stopped at it to examine the puncture marks Ty left on her neck.

"The bloodsucker is a vampire!" she shrieked.

Twin holes, large and slightly indented had dry, trickling streaks of blood. She reached up and then dropped her hand to the floor unable to touch the sore spot.

*A snake*, she thought. Not a vampire. A snake had bitten her. Or had it? It seemed best to leave that troublesome thought alone until she had a clearer mind.

Using the doorknob as leverage, she hauled herself off the floor. She stood better, and when she opened the door, she managed to take several baby steps under her own volition

without support of the wall. Then she tripped. The momentum had her dancing on her toes into the opposite wall. She steadied and inched along the surface to the elevator.

"Damn thing." She smacked her hand against the button repeatedly. "Hurry up."

Once it reached her floor, she stumbled inside. The doors closed before she noticed it was a regular freight elevator instead of the fancy glass capsule. She pushed the button to stop and get off, but the metal box had a mind of its own.

"No," she whimpered, leaning her head back on the wall. She took slow, deep breaths. Claustrophobia was at its worse when she let it rule her.

It didn't seem so bad when the elevator stopped, and the doors opened. She lifted her lashes, and a shadow loomed like a dark cloud barricading her exit.

\* \* \* \*

Ty dragged Kinsey from the conveyance and muffled her protesting squeal with his hand over her mouth.

"Calm down." He struggled to keep her still and quite, but the lady had hellcat in her. The venom of the serpent should have kept her immobile longer. Yet, what did he know of poisons and reactions by victims. It wasn't as if he had a lot of experience in biting women. "I'll remove my hand if you stop fighting me."

She stared at him then nodded, apparently realising she had no choice. He let go, turning her towards him.

"You bit me!" She spat the words with an unusual emphasis on anger instead of fear.

"I know, and I'll do it again if you don't listen to me and do as I say."

Her body tensed beneath his fingers. He suspected she might try to bolt from him. If he had a reason to believe letting her go would save her, he would have.

"I need you to trust me." He drew her closer, holding her against him. The hysterical beat of her heart, matched his.

"How can I?" Her eyes watered as her gaze flitted over his face.

"You know me, Kinsey." He stroked his fingers up and down her spine. "Remember how it used to be between us. You inhale and I exhale."

"I recall being hurt. Our breakup overshadowed the good for a long time."

"But you don't hate me now, do you?" Her hate was the one thing he had to live with that pained him more than not being with her.

She shook her head.

The fateful day he'd made his deal with the devil, he'd put Kinsey out of his life. He'd used cruel words on purpose to keep her from wanting to see him again. Her gaze gave everything away about her truest emotions—while injured, her love for him remained strong. Unfortunately, that was what had brought her to him on the night of his destruction. His contract was up with the devil—his soul no longer his own unless he offered up the soul of a woman that loved him.

Ty lifted Kinsey's face, forcing her downcast eyes to look up at him. She loved him. From the moment he'd seen her in the ballroom, he'd known the devil had manipulated Kinsey into showing up on the night of the ceremony.

"I'll explain, but right now, you can't be seen down here." He looked around, hoping no one saw her. "Will you accept that much?"

"Yes."

Ty looked past her to check and make sure they were out of sight of the ballroom. While the snake on his body knew of his doings, he hoped he still had some control of his future. If it were the last thing he did before dying, he'd save Kinsey.

"What's going on?" she asked.

"It's a complicated story."

She twisted her face from his grip, and he took another, firmer hold.

"Let go." She made a weak effort to wiggle free.

He brushed a light kiss across her lips. "Not until you know everything about me, Kinsey."

Her body relaxed in his grip.

Ty glanced at the door beside the elevator. "Ladies first." He pushed the women's restroom door open.

"What are you doing?"

"Keeping you safe." He prodded her into the room.

"What is going on with you? What was that...that thing that bit me?"

For the staff to clean the restrooms, there was a lock to keep out patrons. He pushed the bolt into place then looked in each stall, making sure they were alone.

"Well?" she asked. "Are you going to tell me what evil society you've joined?" She went to the sink and turned on the faucet.

He walked up behind her and placed his hands on her shoulders. "You won't believe it." He rubbed the smooth skin stretching up the sides of her neck.

"Try me."

He saw fear in her reflection as she looked at him. Selfish greed rose inside his thoughts. He wanted her one last time before she learned the ugly truth.

He caressed her over the dress, crisscrossing the front of her body with his hands. "I need you, honey." He rested his face next to hers.

"No. You can't distract me like you did in the elevator. Something strange is going on, and I want to know what it is." She pushed down on his arms wrapping her midsection.

"I've never needed anyone like I need you," he murmured against her head. "Don't fight me on this."

Kinsey trembled. "Ty, please." There was no hiding the tone of surrender in her voice.

"Remember the elevator?" He circled her with his arms and drew her back tighter. "I felt your needs as strong as my own." He turned her to face him. "Give me a chance to prove to you I won't hurt you." He inched the hem of her dress up and massaged the cheek of her ass.

"You already did a bad job of that." She put a hand on her neck.

Ty tilted her head to the side and fingered the marks. He kissed over the puncture wounds and washed away the blood on her skin. Kinsey's pulse quickened with an apparent nervous expectation he'd bite. It calmed when he moved onward, up to her jaw and across her cheek to her mouth.

"Want me," he whispered his plea, desperate to have her surrender all her fears.

## Chapter Four

Kinsey's heart surged at the request. The sincerity in his voice moved her from indecision. She dropped her hand from the grip on his shirt, down to the front of his trousers. Showing him how much she wanted him came easy. Even as confused as she was by what was happening to her, she needed him back in her life. Things would be different since money was no longer an issue. The incident in the hotel room had to have been an illusion, brought on by a bad reaction to something she'd eaten.

"I do want you." She unzipped his trousers and slipped her fingers inside, rubbing his stiff cock and cupping his balls.

"You'll never know how much that means to me to hear you say it." He held her face and kissed her hard.

That soul-reaching kiss pushed away all her reservations. Whatever Ty had become wasn't as important as having him want her again. She'd been lost without his emotional support. Her days seemed numbered by empty accomplishments. Nothing made her feel as good about herself as the way he did when she had his supportive pep talks. Work should never have been about the money or the money so important it had lost her half her heart.

"You'll have to let go of me if you want more." She tugged and stroked, pulling his arousal free.

Ty's strong hands weakened in their hold, releasing her. She sank down to her knees in front of him, anxious to pleasure him the way he had pleased her in the elevator. Slowly, she teased him with a gentle glide of her thumb over the head of his cock.

His fingers tunnelled into her hair and massaged her head with a tender circling of his fingers. She held his shaft aside and kissed the length, running her tongue up and down along the underside until she felt him breathing heavier. Then sheathing his hot flesh with her mouth, she delighted in the sound of his satisfied moan.

Ty assisted her moves. Maybe he guided more forcefully than she wanted, but she made no complaints. He knew what he enjoyed the most, and all she cared about was savouring his exhilaration.

She sucked long and hard, swirling her tongue around and swallowing him deeper.

"Oh, yeah," he groaned as she put pressure on his balls with the heel of her palm.

She took him close to an orgasm then pulled away. "You like that, don't you?" Bathing the fat end of his cock with an extra abundance of saliva, she kissed the length of his shaft and plied his sensitive area with special care.

"Take them in your mouth," he directed.

She sucked part of his sac between her lips and pressed her face into the soft bush of hair at the base of his arousal. Using his legs as support, she gripped the back of his trembling thighs.

He jerked her head back. "Take me in your mouth."

She licked the tip he pressed to her teeth. With his continued insistence, Kinsey opened and allowed him to feed his long shaft into her mouth. His stuttered grunts stopped, and his fingers clenched against her scalp. Warm and creamy, delicately flavoured, his essence shot to the back of her throat. The clutching muscles of his buttocks tightened under her hands. She had a unique power over this strong, virile male, and she liked it.

"Mmm," she hummed, savouring the zest and consistency. With a hot panting breath, she swept kisses along his shaft. Lifting his jutting erection, she worked in the area that produced deep groans from him.

"No more of this. I want inside you another way." He bent and his mouth collided roughly with hers.

The heated kiss didn't stop when Ty dropped to his knees in front of her. Embracing her, his touch fluttered up and down her back, giving her chills of excitement. Like in the elevator, they were too clothed. She felt at a loss for the sensation she'd experience having his naked body writhe against hers.

"Turn around," he commanded.

She moved easily on the slick marble floor. Behind her was a tufted lounge. Ty bent her onto the seat and pushed up her dress. He slapped her bare cheek, and she squealed, eager for another. Each one, he followed with a cooling wet lick.

"Move your leg back," he instructed, curving an arm around her thigh.

Inserting a finger into her wet centre, he alternated between spanking and massaging her bottom. She jerked against the penetration of his finger and shivered when it brushed a sensitive place deep inside her.

Kinsey climaxed, and her vaginal muscles clamped down hard on his knuckle. He didn't stop smacking her bottom until the orgasm numbed and her inner muscles stopped twitching.

"Enough," she gasped.

Ty wrapped his arm under her chest and pulled her up, back against him. "I want to give you an orgasm in a hundred ways."

She nodded, hoping he'd try.

"It feels so good to hold you, honey." His mouth moved over her cheek and left her with affectionate wet kisses.

He made thinking hard as his finger continued gliding in and out of her.

"Do we still have a deal about the honest answers?" she rasped.

"For each orgasm you have, I'll answer one question." He pressed her back down and she lay on the tufted seat, already exhausted.

Her bottom wiggled and jumped at his touch. The involuntary reaction caused him to caress her with a slower swirl of his hand.

"Hurry," she whispered, feeling the start of another orgasm. "Oh God," a funny sound burbled out of her.

He straddled her lower legs on the floor and parted the cheeks of her ass with firm fingers. She guessed the pressure on the crinkled ring of her anus was his tongue and she knew for sure when he licked the twitching hole.

His cursory probe alarmed her.

"Oh, please," she wheezed. "Not there."

"Why not?" He poked his tongue into her tightly clenched bottom.

"You've never...I've never...Oh, God." He forced her open with a penetrating jab into the circlet.

The mere suggestion of fucking her ass gave her an orgasm, but that wasn't where his cock landed when he righted himself.



Sidling up close, he pressed into her dripping cunt. Warm and wet, she was impatiently ready. He slid his touch up her arms and wove his fingers between hers, holding her hands down on the plush seat.

He hardly gave her room to move as he jabbed his erection deep into her. It forced an unladylike grunt from her. His hips pounded with unmercifully speed and exacted more of the stuttered whines.

Jackrabbits didn't hump the way Ty did. Climax and orgasm blended from one to the next, and yet, she couldn't get enough. It was as if the devil guided her actions and fuelled her demands.

"More," she begged when he pulled free.

Her mind was a whirl along with her body. Ty twisted her around, and his mouth brutally smashed against hers. She ate up his kiss, thirsty for his saliva, hungry for his body. He lowered, pushed and heaved her to the floor. She wasn't sure how to describe the forcefulness to his moves – aggressive seemed a tame word.

He wrenched down her dress and her breasts bounced at the sudden jarring action.

"Touch them," he ordered.

She did as commanded and rubbed her fingers over her aching nipples, fondling the gold hoops piercing them. The stimulation spiked her flesh into hard knots. Ty's quick undressing aroused them with an urgency to have his mouth relieve the painful yearn they suffered stretched taut within the circle of the nipple rings.

Ty's jacket and shirt went first. He stood up, leaving her alone on the cool marble. Removing his shoes and trousers, he hypnotised her with the tattoo coiling his body from ankle to neck.

Kinsey watched it for signs of movement. The unique snake was as unusual in design as it was for this businessman to have it inked on his tawny skin. In the elevator, she'd been sure she'd seen it move, and she'd been positive it slithered beneath her palm. How unlike her to have nightmarish daydreams. She had to pass them off as something brought on by her apprehensions in meeting Ty again.

Anxiety compelled her to sit. Ty pushed her back down with a foot. His bare toes rubbed between her breasts and down to her belly.

"Pull up your dress." He jerked his head as if it would make her obey quicker.

She closed her eyes at the touch of his toes rubbing her shaved pussy. Sexual abnormalities always gave her an orgasm. She shuddered at the insertion of his big toe into her hot centre. The erotic play guided her desire to go with the experience, and she twisted her nipples, rings and all.

"Look up here." His raspy, hoarse voice went barely above a whisper.

She turned her gaze towards him.

"You like that, don't you?" He pushed deeper, kicking more toes into the moist folds of her sex.

Kinsey nodded, only she hated his smug expression. She tolerated dominance in a man only so far. However, she had a wanton's body that blushed at the thoughts of more decadent foreplay.

She bit her lower lip, timidly embarrassed by his intense stare.

Ty wiggled his toes, and she lifted her hips, rocking, and thrusting herself against his foot. Her clit quivered eagerly each time he bumped the ring attached to it.

Kinsey panted, the stimulation making her writhe on the floor in complete abandon to Ty's power over her.

Then, he stepped back and knelt down.

"This has got to go." He grabbed the hem of her dress.

"What are you doing?"

"Whatever I want." He ripped the garment up the side along the seam and flung the tube-type dress open.

"That dress is – was – expensive," she complained.

"Like the thong?"

"Yes."

"It was a waste of money." He lowered her to the cold floor, and she felt more like a slut than a paid whore. The restroom took on a less attractive appearance. "You're perfect without extravagance."

Ty wasted no time in doing exactly as he pleased. In one flex, he sunk into her. The nest of wiry black hair surrounding the base of his cock, tickled her bare mound.

She was a slave to his lust. If he hadn't thrilled her with every stir of his hips, she might have considered screaming to be released.

"That's it, baby." He rammed her repeatedly. "Tighten up that cunt of yours."

She didn't think he needed a boost to his ego by reminding him he was the one with the thicker-than-any-man-she-knew cock. It stretched her with each plunge. He hit all the right spots to bring about her clenching naturally.

"The floor is getting hard on my back." She had to tell him and hope for a solution other than stopping.

"Give me a second." His mouth fit over hers, and a familiar shudder of his body tickled her nipples.

His heated juices blended with hers then a cold blast of air shot up the gapping entrance.

Ty pushed up and hopped to his feet.

She almost laughed when his cock swung wild like a tree limb in a storm. Yet, it was the movement of the tattoo that made her freeze and watch. The shadow of the snake's head swung away from his neck and Ty rotated his head into the silhouette. For a second, he took on the appearance of a man with a snake face.

"Give me your hand." He held his arm out.

She shook her head, recalling the last time she'd seen the grand illusion. Fear rattled her through to the core. "It was real?" she asked.

Ty stooped down and cupped Kinsey's face.

"I'm not going to bite you." He gave a gentle caress to her smooth cheek. "One bite can paralyze, twice can kill. I don't know how long the venom stays in your system."

He took her hands and pulled her up on her feet.

"I don't care how many answers you owe me, you are going to tell me what you are!" She stomped her foot and folded her arms over the tantalising breasts jiggling with her vehemence.

"Here, put on my shirt." He picked it up and held it for her.

"What are you?" She shoved her arms into the sleeves. "A vampire or —"

"A man."

"No. You bit me and made it so I couldn't move." She had trouble with the buttons, and he helped.

"I'm a man, possessed by a demon. I've sold my soul to the devil, and it's time to pay." He grabbed her arms and pulled her closer. "I didn't mean to involve you."

"I don't understand."

"Let's go up to my suite. I'll try to explain better there." He cupped her face and drew her to him. "I'm not the man you or anyone thinks I am."

"After this," she waved a hand at the floor. "I think you're all the other things people think and more."

Ty laughed and kissed her forehead. "There's always been something magical between us, Kinsey." He gripped her chin and tugged her face close. "You feel it, too, don't you? Now can I kiss you?"

"A patronising attitude doesn't win points in your favour."

"I'm asking," he whispered, closing the space between their faces. "No. I'm begging."

She made a cross-eyed attempt to look at him. "You promise—swear, on whatever you worship, you'll not bite me again?"

Ty stood up and let go of her. "I can promise, but not swear on something."

"Why?"

He put a hand to the back of his head, feeling the pain associated with his rejection of the devil. "Let's just say, I worship you and leave it at that." He retrieved his clothes and dressed.

"Ty?" She took his hand, extending a sign of her wish to trust him.

He wrapped his jacket around her shoulders. From her forehead to the tip of her chin, he showed her his affection. Their lips sealed together, and he spent a long time giving her the lead for his movements. Her tongue curled his, and he thirsted for her every lick. Her hands travelled his bare back, making him shiver and giving him another very stiff erection. She couldn't make him not want her adoration.

He backed to the door and blindly unbolted it.

"Ty, we can't go out there like this?"

He smiled against her mouth and put his forehead against hers. "The freight elevator cannot be seen from the ballroom." He opened the door and checked for anyone lurking in the hallway.

Dragging her outside the room, he took her to the elevator door and pushed the button.

"If someone sees —"

"They'll see the womaniser, Ty Serpent, hiding the young lady he is absconding with to his penthouse suite."

Her smiles were delightful, but her laughter was a treasure he hadn't had enough of in their time together.

The doors opened, and he eased her inside. Immediately, she breathed heavier — anxious and fidgety.

"Close your eyes." He captured her mouth and kissed her the whole ride, keeping her calm.

"Thanks." She hugged him once the doors opened again.

He couldn't remember the last time, if ever, a woman thanked him for anything. Before his ten-year stint as a disciple of the devil, his memories were faded.

"Down here." He pulled her along the short hallway.

"This isn't your room." She looked towards the door of the room he'd put her in before.

"On this floor, they all are." He took her inside.

"The privileges of being wealthy?"

"It's more like a curse." Ty walked to the mini-bar. "Would you like a drink?"

"No, thank you."

Kinsey sat on the sofa. He poured a drink but left it on the bar.

"I owe you answers." He sat next to her. "However, I have a question for you."

"I have nothing to hide."

"Why did you really come to the dinner tonight?" He put an arm around her shoulders.

"A story, a chance to see you again, I don't know anymore. I had a crazy notion you had to be up to no good. Ten years ago, you were a penniless nobody then you were mysteriously worth billions. I wanted to write a negative story about you and hurt you for leaving me."

"I'm sorry."

"Why? You win. I'll not write anything about bad you. I'm not as vengeful as I thought I could be."

"Kinsey, there's never been anyone remotely close to taking your place in my heart." He reached to the end table and opened the drawer. "And I'm going to leave you very well off to prove it."

"What are you talking about?" Out of curiosity, she leaned, watching him take out a sheet of hotel stationery and a pen.

"This is my lawyer's private number." He wrote down the information.

"Why would I need this?"

"It's a surprise." He picked her up. "I have need of you in a bed. Do you mind?"

"As long as you keep answering questions."

"Hmm." He kissed her. "I thought you weren't going to write anything about me?"

"I still have personal questions." She stroked his neck. "The snake?"

"Don't touch it." He put her on the bed.

"Tell me."

Ty sat on the edge of the mattress and lowered his head into his hands. Kinsey, sweet and innocent, sat behind him and put an arm around his waist.

"Tell me about the snake." She pressed a kiss against his shoulder.

"Believe it or not, magic exists. I made a wish ten years ago, and an old man appeared. He said he'd grant it on the condition I'd give up my life after ten years. I was twenty. Thirty didn't sound like middle-aged to me."

"So you agreed?"

"The moment I shook his hand, he turned into a shadowed figure. I was so mesmerised by the transformation, I didn't believe what happened – until I went home and saw the snake wrapped around me."

Kinsey pushed him, and he flopped back on the bed.

"From then on, the snake has been like a good luck charm. Business dealings, investments, whatever I want falls into my lap." He stared at the ceiling instead of the shocked look in Kinsey's eyes.

"Like me?" She scooted away.

"No." He grabbed her hand. "Maybe."

"Maybe? That doesn't sound very romantic."

"I don't have time to romance you, sweetheart. Tonight is the end of my illustrious life."

"You're going to be set free?"

"Yeah, something like that. Let's not think about it, okay?" He laid her back on the bed. "I want to think about you and what I want to do with you right now."

Ty wiped the tears from her cheeks.

"Tonight has been like some bad nightmare."

"I hope not all of it." He planted his mouth over hers and drank in her light sobs.

The only good thing about dying was it kept Kinsey safe forever. That was the flipside of the deal. The devil got him instead of her.

## Chapter Five

Kinsey's mind seesawed back and forth between Ty's passion and the statement he'd made about signing over his soul to the devil. *Since when did the devil give back anyone's soul?* Was Ty playing a game with her?

Ty's fingers raked away the shirt over her breasts. She twisted and arched with each pinch and pluck to her nipples. His kiss deepened while he continued to fondle her in other areas. She pressed her palms to the hard flesh over his shoulders. Strong, wealthy and charismatic were fine qualities for any woman to love. Handsome, sexually passionate and expressing affection for her were better. She could do without the complicated setup if it was to win her back.

His fingers trailed from her belly to her throat as he swept the caress up and down. He grabbed a breast and mindlessly flicked the tip for a minute. "I've missed you."

She had trouble letting down her guard and telling him the same. "Aside from missing me, have you done things you regret?"

"Many." His touch glided down her side.

"Illegal?"

Kinsey put her hand over his. Her fingers locked between his knuckles.

"Maybe." His breath dusted her skin. "Is this the reporter asking again?"

"Everything is off the record, Mr. Serpent." She studied the snake crossing his chest, using her fingertips as a guide to her inspection. "This is a very detailed design. It must have taken quite a while to get it this realistic."

"You don't believe anything you've seen, do you?"

"I have to admit, you had me going for a while. But I don't appreciate your scaring me like that."

"Honey, the snake is real."

"Right. Satan, a demon with a tail and horns just happened to choose to ink a snake on you because you're name is Serpent."

"The devil is a jokester."



"You're the jokester. I see that much hasn't changed."

"Maybe not."

Kinsey gasped as his grip tightened and shaped her breast. His mouth fit over the hardened peak, and she involuntarily arched as his tongue rotated around her nipple. She snatched at the sheets when his mouth claimed the other and suckled greedily, pulling on the ring.

"Oh." She grabbed his head.

He licked her moistened skin. Her chest heaved so that each rise he lapped alternately at her breasts. Then Ty straddled her thighs and reached both hands behind her neck, pulling her up to him.

"I want in you," he voiced against the hard kiss on her mouth.

Anxiously, she raked her hands up and down his back. She wanted him in her, too.

He left her on the bed and removed his clothes. It took less than a minute for him to resume his position and continue his exploration of her body. Appreciated the most was his hand cupping between her legs.

She lifted her hips to his steady rubbing. His fingers slipped inside her, and the constant pumping led her into spasms. Relief flooded her convulsing body. He pushed her legs apart with a knee and positioned himself over her. What had caressed her belly went like a lightning bolt into her. He thrust hard, pulled back and thrust again. Their bellies brushed each time.

Kinsey shivered involuntarily, tickled by the momentary stir of his chest hair over her receptive nipples reaching for him. Each time he came down, she inhaled the arousing scent of his skin – male lust stimulated her senses.

In and out.

In and out.

In and out.

Her mind ticked like a metronome.

Each thrust went faster, harder and deeper. The initial tightness she usually experienced expanded to accommodate the width and length of him. Her tense muscles twitched violently. Ty's ardour turned her cool serene body into an inferno. She clenched and consumed his hardness. For a single moment, she had him trapped within her.

"You're an amazing breath of freshness to my stale existence." He kissed over her cheeks.

Lust, decadence and wanton abandonment became mere words.

Ty rolled, kissing the length of her. She pushed him to his back and grasped the shaft of his cock. Opposite ends attracted and while she sucked on him, he dragged her leg over his chest and sucked on her.

"You are delicious." He hummed into the channel of her pussy.

His hands caressed her ass, and she rocked against his mouth, onto the thrust of his tongue.

"Your skin is so soft, right here." She licked the smooth fleshy tip of his erection.

Slipping her lips over the head until she could catch the rim, she rolled her tongue around and extracted a low groan from him.

"I want in you again." He flipped her around on the bed.

He covered her face with vigorous kisses. Sweet pecks and sloppy slurps were the magic of love. Then he grasped her arm and turned her belly down. He jacked her hips up from the mattress and his fingers reached beneath her spread legs. She felt him rake deep into the fold and drag the fluid of their spending up the crevice of her bottom.

She leaned on her forearms, clenching her jaw as he smeared the substance into her anus. One finger rimmed the inside and lubricated the gap. Protection seemed out of the question. She wanted to experience the same things he did.

He pressed against the opening, pushing into her just a little.

A whine broke from her at the discomfort. The intense pressure grew as he penetrated further. He partially withdrew and made another stab. When he tried again, her reflexes squeezed, trying to shut him out.

She should have known, Ty would know what to do. He smacked her bottom, and she immediately pushed back. Her ring opened, and her body accepted the full length of Ty.

"Oh God," she cried, fighting the overwhelming strain.

Relief sprung instantly at his retreat. After that, she grew accustomed to the heaviness of his thick erection gliding in and out of her. Soon, she was panting hard from the rise of an orgasm.

Ty's grunting escalated, as well. He pumped his hips, and when the shot of heat spurt into her bottom, he slammed his cock into her with a force that laid her out flat on the bed.

Kinsey screamed with pain and pleasure. Ty ground his groin against her ass, and pounded into her. She'd never experienced anything so decadent. Her whole body shuddered, aroused by the stimulation.

"Don't stop," she begged, feeling the burning rapture of an orgasm.

"I knew you'd like to be fucked raw in that sweet ass of yours," he panted near her face.

His strangely wicked tone made her squirm to get out from under him. From the corner of her eye, she saw a movement and looked at the reflection of them in the mirror. The shadow of the serpent looked too as Ty lifted his head. His dark brown eyes glazed over, almost as if he didn't see her. A forked tongue darted out and flicked the air.

Unnerved by her thoughts, she laid still, hypnotised by the euphoric sensations. She'd be sore, but it all seemed worth it, until...

Ty cocked his head and absorbed the snake's silhouette. He lifted up, extracting his cock from the tender channel. He lowered onto her, holding most of his weight on his arms.

"I didn't have control," he apologised.

She closed her eyes, understanding what happened.

*Fucked by the devil.* The thought created mixed feelings.

Ty rose off the bed. He went off to the bathroom. A rush of solitude swept her damp skin and left her sadly abandoned. The running water told her he was washing off the remnants of their sexual joining. She turned over and waited. When he returned, he sat on the edge of the bed. She placed a hand on his face and rubbed her palm over the bristly texture of his unshaven jaw. A slight protrusion of a fang hung from below his top lip. She touched it and found it enlivening every pore on her body. The man she loved was a man possessed, and she still wanted him. Satan's temptations of ecstasy had captured her desires, too.

She petted the curve of the tattoo and trailed the coil of it across his chest.

"You make me hot." She kissed the scaly surface of an illusion gaining substance. "I need you."

Obsession.

Possession.

Aggression.

"Please." She rubbed harder over the snake.

As if she were the demon in a rush to get back to hell, she grasped his arms and pulled him down to her.

"Fuck me." The words were hers, but they strangely had a detachment she didn't understand.

Ty breathed raggedly.

She witnessed how her constant strokes over the tattoo agitated him. He had no gentleness in him as he sheathed his cock.

"Yes!" She scratched her fingernails over his hard buttocks. "Give it to me."

She squeezed her eyes shut. They were like animals thrashing together in a volatile mating. Her senses rushed back with the conclusion they were pawns of the devil.

Ty's shuddering plunges stopped, and he jerked her up off the bed, attached to him. He rested on his heels, and she sat on his lap, impaled by his maleness.

Kinsey froze in his arms that tenderly enfolded her into the warmth of his body. The tick of his heartbeat upon her own, seduced her towards sleep. The humid curve of his neck invited her to rest her face. Kissing the pulse beating fast and furiously under her lips, she regained strength.

"It's time for me to go," he whispered.

She dropped her head back into the palm of his hand. He caught her mouth up with his and tasted the salty wetness of sweat or tears.

"Don't leave me," she begged.

"I don't have a choice. If I don't go to them waiting in the basement, they'll come for me."

"This can't be real."

"Unfortunately, it is." He put his forehead against hers. "Always know..."

"Please," she begged for him to stop whatever was going on.

\* \* \* \*

Ty put on only his pants and shoes, skipping over everything else.

"I have to leave this minute." He leaned over and kissed her. "Stay in this room until morning."

The glistening streak of tears on her cheeks remained a steady flow. He wondered about the woman at the party. He had met her on several occasions at similar functions. There was only one reason for her to be with the man she was with that night—to die in place of another one of the devil's disciples.

"Kinsey?" He looked at her sitting in the centre of the bed, holding the sheet around her.

"Why can't you stop this joke now? It's gone on too long."

"Kinsey, I..." He reached out and stroked her damp cheek. "Goodbye, Kinsey."

He couldn't tell her he loved her. Knowing how his heart broke was enough to prevent him from heaping misery on her. In less than twenty-four hours, his life had turned upside down. If he could prevent Kinsey's from doing the same, he would.

Ty double locked the door on his way out. The special bolts would prevent her from leaving the room. He didn't trust the maid to heed the privacy door hangers. In the morning, Larson would return to the room he used and find Kinsey. Only then would she get out.

Taking the elevator down to the cellar, Ty worried about Kinsey's claustrophobia. The suite was large, but he didn't know how severe her fear of enclosed spaces was any longer. He pushed the button to go back and unlock the door. However, the doors of the elevator opened, and he saw his plan came too late.

"Ty's here, everyone," one man cheered.

Two others flanked Ty and led him into the circling cluster of men. They looked happy for the process, and his mind questioned why? Eventually, their contracts with Satan would expire, and they'd be there in front of a pool of boiling oil. Who would take the plunge and which of them would sacrifice a woman in their place? The demon in him had planned to leave subliminal messages in Kinsey's mind to attend the event. After he'd spotted her stalking him around the ballroom, he'd fought his tainted soul's urge to sacrifice her.

Ty undressed and watched the snake slither from his skin and transform into a man—the same little old fellow who'd approached him with the deal of selling his soul.

"Ty, you've not brought the woman?"

"I never had any intention of bringing her." He folded his arms and stared the man in the eye. "This was my bargain."

"But I helped you make her willing. Did you not feel her passion?"

"You possessed her for your own amusement."

He blocked his thoughts of Kinsey rescuing him from hell. He didn't know what gave him the stupid notion. Another trick of the mind, thanks to the devil, he assumed. Nothing could save him from his fate.

## Chapter Six

Kinsey waited until she heard the elevator doors shut. It wasn't easy hearing through the thick barrier.

"No one tells me to stay." She buttoned Ty's shirt from top to bottom. The tails hung to her knees. "You want to play games? Then fine, I'll play."

Lifting a heavy metal statue of a nude female, she hit the door lock. It took three solid whacks before the electronic system released the bolt.

Her toes sank in the plush carpet in the lobby of the penthouse suites. She glanced down and wondered if she shouldn't have put on her shoes. The idea of heels and a man's dress shirt didn't exactly appeal to her sense of taste in attire. She opted not to go back and get the red spiked gems she'd paid a fortune for.

Tapping hurriedly on the freight elevator button, she waited an exceedingly long time. She placed her ear against the shiny cold steel and listened. Not one echoing clink or clank resounded.

Frustrated at the delays, she ran to the other elevator. It opened immediately.

Ty had mentioned the basement, and she decided to head there, even though she still did not believe his devil story.

The elevator moved fast and stopped.

"The thirteenth floor," she groaned. The stainless steel glided apart, and an older couple entered. The man looked down and stared at her feet. The woman pretended she wasn't there.

When the elevator moved and stopped again, she watched another man and two women enter. They were nearer her age. They also had no qualms in giving her funny looks.

Finally, the ride ended where everyone got off and she stayed inside alone. She pressed the button and went to the hotel lobby floor. The doors separated and she pressed the B button again. Nothing happened. The light on the panel lit up button seven, and she leapt off the elevator before it took her on a ride in the wrong direction.

"Ma'am, do you need any assistance?" A young man approached, pock faced, and eager to help. "Maybe a taxi?"

"No. Yes, I do need help. The B button in the elevator doesn't work. That is for the basement, isn't it?"

"It has been disabled for several years – too many guests ending up in down there. That was a lawsuit waiting to happen or so Mr. Serpent has said. Personally, I doubt anyone ever got off. I mean, if you see you're not in the lobby, you assume you've pushed the wrong button then naturally you push another and don't get out."

She didn't think he'd ever take a breath. "The freight elevator, where is it?" she asked.

"It stops on the third floor, per Mr. Serpent's orders," he answered, obviously new and untrained.

"Why his?"

"He owns the building."

"Oh." She looked around. "I didn't know. Well, how do I get to the freight elevator?"

"There's an underground garage entrance for deliveries, and they're taken to the third floor...rear, not ballroom side...and then –"

The elevator dinged and before the shiny panels slid all the way opened, Kinsey dashed inside and tapped the third floor button. The ride took hardly a second. Staring at the ballroom entrance, she realised she would have to cross the room full of people.

However, what did she care? No one there knew her. The elite didn't give out free lunch plates. She noted the placard welcoming some women's club. She definitely didn't have the appropriate attire.

Boldly, Kinsey walked across the room. Flashes of light caught her gaze, and she noticed the clamour of a dozen reporters trying to get a photo of her.

"Kinsey Waters?" one man said. "Yeah, that's Kinsey Waters."

She didn't know who he was, but he came at her like a vulture. The paparazzi followed him.

On the run, she circled tables and jumped over feet in the way. When a chair leg caught her pinkie toe, and she fell like a sack of potatoes to the floor. She scrambled to get up, not even thinking whether the shirt lifted high enough to expose her bare bottom.



She found the freight elevator, and the doors opened instantly to the push of the button. They didn't close nearly as fast, and she cowered in the corner, hoping to be enclosed in the cubicle before the scandal seekers could get inside. She didn't have answers for the many of the questions they were already shouting at her. Was she protesting equal rights for women? Was she anti-abortion? Was she a prostitute?

Kinsey heaved a laboured sigh of relief when the doors shut. Only she found herself trapped in a new dilemma. The tightness in her chest came suddenly, as if that devil Ty spoke of was squeezing her lungs. She couldn't breathe. Unlike the glass elevator, this one let in no outside light and the light bulb was burnt out. Then the doors opened, and she took a deep breath.

She shuffled cautiously out into the open area. She heard voices, muffled in tone. Walking between crates and piping running along the walls, she followed the sounds.

"Oh geez," she gasped, as a mouse ran past her. "Little stinker."

Creeping along farther into the dark, she tried to make out words from the voices. Whatever Ty's game, she hoped to catch him in the act. Her bravado didn't squelch her nervousness, and she strained to hear the reassuring resonance of Ty. Her gaze constantly shifted in different directions in the black abyss of the cellar.

"You can still change your mind and get the woman you're protecting," a man's muffled voice echoed from farther ahead.

"I'm all you'll get tonight," Ty answered.

Kinsey walked faster. She didn't know what to think. When she'd decided to find Ty, she'd thought maybe she'd imagined half of what she'd seen and heard. She'd allowed for the possibility that Ty was playing a joke. Now it sounded as if there was some pact made with a group of people who would murder him or assist him in a bizarre suicide. Life never ceased to amaze her with the stranger than fiction things people did.

She squeezed into the niche between crates of champagne and barrels marked cooking oil. She bumped one, and a hollow sound reverberated in the empty drum. Looking up, she discovered she wasn't the only one to hear the echoing thud.

"Seize her," someone yelled.

"Stop!" Ty's voice thundered over everyone's chatter.

"It she your sacrifice?" An old man stepped forward.

"No," Ty answered. "Now let her go."

"We cannot," a weaselly little man stated.

"Why?" Ty looked at him.

"She's seen us."

"Everyone has seen us." Ty's brow furrowed.

Kinsey's feet dangled as two men carried her by the arms. She kicked to get free.

"What's going on?" She looked at Ty as she asked, although, she was willing to listen to anyone's answer.

Magnificent in his naked form, Ty's brown-eyed stare met hers.

"It's time," one man shouted, and others cheered.

The circle of them closed in on Ty.

"Wait." He pushed them back.

"Do you wish her to take your place?" the old man asked. "Does she want to jump into the world beyond?" He waved a hand at the strange puddle of bubbling liquid on the floor.

"No!"

"Yes!"

The words were spoken in unison by Ty and Kinsey.

"No!" Ty repeated. "She's not jumping into the gateway of boiling oil."

Kinsey kicked her heel into one man's shin, and he released her. The other lost his grip. She ran to Ty. "Stop this game. You're really scaring me."

"Kinsey, you should have stayed in the suite. Larson would have taken care of everything. I have to leave you, and this will make things right for me." He held her hand to his trembling lips.

"This is real." She didn't want to believe it, yet in her heart, she had known all along that Ty wouldn't have made up such a cruel joke to hurt her. "Take me with you?"

"Take you...with me? I can't willingly drag you into hell?"

"It'll be hell for me, knowing I can never see you again, you son of a bitch." She hit him on the chest.

His hand covered hers as she spread her fingers.

"The tattoo is gone." She rubbed the smooth black hairs on his skin over his heart.

"My guard has a new location. I've had my ten years, and I must go, too." He gripped her arms and thrust her back to the men. "Get her out of here."

She watched him look at the old man. The fellow gave a reluctant nod, and the men dragged her away.

"No!" Kinsey broke free.

"Kinsey!"

She heard Ty's voice as she threw herself into the bubbling oil. The pain and anguish of her actions made her unafraid. The memory of his hand stroking her cheek, lifted many reservations from her heart. Sacrifice wasn't a heroic deed. It was a heartfelt trial, testing love's boundaries.

As her mind hovered on the verge of reality, she gripped tighter to her imagination's gift of feeling Ty's hand in hers. The devil couldn't take away the love she had experienced with Ty, and she'd not regret going to hell for the love he had returned.

## Chapter Seven

Ty pulled Kinsey up from the floor and kissed over her cheeks, nose and forehead. An infusion of giggles turned into the puffs of air on his face, making him laugh.

"Kinsey, honey, open your eyes." He held her face. "Kinsey."

Her lashes lifted, and he looked into a gaze filled with happiness.

"I'm not dead?" She kissed him. "Or did you follow me to hell?"

"I followed, but we're not in hell." He glanced around. "We're in the cellar of the hotel."

"The oil?" She felt around. "I jumped into the oil."

"You jumped, I jumped and the devil got a case of indigestion." He smiled and pulled her mouth firmly to his. "He doesn't like people sacrificing themselves for love's sake. Everyone scattered at his command and then he and the oil vanished."

"Why? Am I not good enough for the devil?"

"You're too good for him—and for me. Nevertheless, I'm begging you to give me a chance to rebuild our relationship. Let me love you."

"This was a joke, wasn't it?" She hit him. "How could you scare me half to death with all this talk of death, and that snake thing biting me? How did you make it so I couldn't move?"

"Kinsey." He shook her.

In her eyes, he saw how hard she fought to distrust the theory of hell and everything evil that went with it.

"Honey, you can believe whatever you want as long as you accept I love you."

"Well, I didn't go hurling myself into that puddle of oil, er...onto this floor, because I didn't want that."

"Forgive me for everything that I put your through tonight?" He stroked her hair back from her face.

"It'll never happen again?"

“Never. There is no more selling my soul for money or happiness. I want you for better or worse.”

“I love you, Ty, and I don’t care how penniless we become. That’ll never change.”

Ty kissed Kinsey, sealing the pact. The wealth of her love was all he’d ever need, too.

## About the Author

Brenda Williamson has written for many years from her country home. She has hundreds of publishing credits that include poetry, short stories, novellas and novels. Her genres feature everything that can be romanticised. Her published stories include eras such as Regency, Medieval, and contemporary. Her paranormals are widespread with elements of fantasy and shape-shifting, including creatures such as werewolves, vampires, dragons, and more.

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