

ELLORA'S CAVE PRESENTS

BAST'S  
*Perfume*  
Goddess Revealed

MARISA  
CHENERY

ELLORA'S CAVE *Quickies*®

## **Bast's Perfume**

*Marisa Chenery*

*Goddess Revealed, Book One*

Trapped in the immortal realm by a vengeful demon, Bast is finally freed when a human opens the ancient jar that binds her. But he is no ordinary human; he is her mate, a fact Bast tends to conceal—for her time in the mortal world is limited.

When a cat inexplicably appears the moment he opens the perfumed jar, Slade is bemused—then stunned when the cat morphs into a stunning goddess. Their attraction is immediate, their passion unstoppable. With each blazing sexual encounter, Slade's in danger of losing his heart. But he could lose far more, for the demon is near, drawn ever closer by the lure of Bast's perfume...

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Bast's Perfume

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# *BAST'S PERFUME*

**Marisa Chenery**

## **Chapter One**

"Let's see what Frank has sent this time," Slade Nelson said out loud to himself, alone inside his antique store, which was closed for the day. With a crowbar in hand, he bent down to open the crate that sat on the floor in front of him.

He and his partner Frank Thompson owned the fairly successful store in the middle of downtown Toronto. The partnership worked out well for both. Frank, always the wanderer of the two, traveled all over the world acquiring items for the store while Slade stayed in Canada to take care of the business end of things. Something Slade liked doing a lot.

As Slade worked to open the crate, he felt the familiar excitement and curiosity rise over what could be inside. His business partner had gone to Egypt a couple of weeks before. The crate, which had been sent from that country, had arrived shortly before he'd closed the store.

The lid now removed, Slade pulled out handfuls of packing material until he reached the items inside. He smiled as he lifted the first clay jar out of the crate. There were four in total, all different sizes, from as large as a wine decanter to a small one not much taller than the width of his hand. The first three jars appeared to be the real thing, not from ancient Egyptian times of course, but antiques nonetheless. The fourth one gave Slade pause.

This jar was the smallest of the four. Picking it up, he held it in front of him as he peered at the images painted on the body. His brows drew together as he studied it closer. The colors of the paint seemed too bright, too pristine for this jar to be considered an antique. He shook his head. Slade couldn't see Frank making such a mistake. Part of the reason why Slade didn't complain about Frank doing most of the

purchasing was the fact that Frank had an eye for antiques. His business partner could practically sniff them out from a mile away.

Slade traced one of the images on the jar. It depicted a woman with the head of a cat, a domestic cat. He knew a little bit about the Egyptian gods so he recognized the image as the goddess Bast. Next to the cat-headed woman stood the image of a woman who didn't have any animal-like depictions. Slade figured both images had to be Bast, in her human and cat-headed forms, since both women wore the same tight-fitting sheath dress. There was no question in his mind that the jar had to be a copy of a much older original. Everything about it seemed too new.

Curious to see what the jar might have held at one time, Slade lifted off the lid – and the most intoxicating perfume he had ever smelled surrounded him. Slade took a deep breath. Though the jar had nothing inside it, the leftover scent went straight to his head. The perfume smelled so feminine, so alluring, his body started to respond. His cock jerked inside his dress pants as he thought of what it would be like to make love to a woman who wore this perfume.

Slade snorted. He had to get a grip on himself. He wasn't *that* hard up. At least he didn't think he was. That just the smell of a woman's perfume would give him a hard-on was pretty pathetic. At thirty years old, he should be way past that stage. Unable to help himself, he inhaled more of the perfume's scent into his lungs.

The sound of a cat's meow suddenly drew his attention to the store's front. A black cat stood by the door, watching him.

Wondering how the cat could have gotten into the store without his knowledge, Slade replaced the lid on the jar before carefully putting it on the counter next to the others. He turned back to the cat, intending to send it on its way, but it no longer stood by the front door.

Just what he needed at the end of the day. To have to hunt down a stray cat that had somehow managed to get loose in the store didn't thrill him, to say the least.

In the end, he searched the entire store twice but couldn't find the cat anywhere. Too tired after the long day to work his brain around this mystery, Slade decided to head home. Tomorrow he'd have to see if he could find where the cat had managed to slip inside and block it so it wouldn't be able to return. If he wasn't careful he would have mice or some other kind of pest inside the store.

On the way out, Slade grabbed the perfume jar. Since it couldn't be sold in the store, he decided he wanted it for himself. The overall design of the jar appealed to him. It didn't have anything to do with the fact that he couldn't get enough of the smell of the perfume it once held.

Or so he told himself more than once for good measure.

\* \* \* \* \*

Slade arrived at his brick two-story just as the sun began to set. After he parked his car in the garage, he picked up the perfume jar and headed inside his empty house. When he had first bought his three-bedroom detached, Slade had thought it would be the perfect place to start a family. What he hadn't counted on was his inability to find a woman he wanted to marry and start that family with. He had dated his fair share of women, but he hadn't been able to find one who would tolerate his long workdays, or one he actually wanted to spend the rest of his life with. When he finally did marry, it would be to a woman he felt he could be with forever. For him, divorce wouldn't be an option.

He placed the jar on the living room coffee table as he fought the urge to lift the lid and once more smell the scent of the heady perfume. Slade shook his head. How pathetic was he? It had been a while since he'd last had a girlfriend, but it hadn't been *that* long since he'd taken a woman to bed. He shouldn't be getting this turned on just from perfume. Deliberately, he turned his back on the jar and headed upstairs to change out of his dress shirt and pants.

Now wearing a comfy pair of jeans and a t-shirt, Slade made his way downstairs to the kitchen, opening the fridge and grabbing some leftover spaghetti. As it heated in the microwave, he found his thoughts drawn back to the jar that sat on his coffee table. Maybe he could get one good sniff in before his food finished heating...

No. He was going to stay in the kitchen and eat his meal no matter how much the thought of smelling the perfume appealed to him.

The microwave beeped behind him. Grabbing a fork out of a drawer, Slade took his heated spaghetti to the kitchen table. Before he sat down to eat, he poured himself a glass of red wine. Instead of leisurely taking the time to enjoy his food, however, Slade practically inhaled it as the remembered scent of the perfume made him almost desperate to smell it again. It was as if he'd become addicted and needed his fix. "Gee, can I sink any lower?" he grumbled to himself.

He finally gave up the fight as he put his plate in the dishwasher and picked up his glass of wine before heading for the living room. He set the glass down on the table before sitting on the couch. Not waiting another minute, he pulled the perfume jar closer and lifted the lid, his eyes closing as he dragged in lungful after lungful of the intoxicating scent.

Slade's eyes snapped open as the sound of a cat's meow reached his ears. He turned his head in the direction of the sound and sucked in a breath. The same black cat that had been in his store now sat in the middle of his living room.

Slowly, so as not to scare the cat, he put the jar lid down on the coffee table and stood up. The cat didn't move as he stepped around the table and moved to stand in front of it. Instead of running away, the cat began to purr as it wove in and out of his legs. Slade reached down to grab the cat by the scruff of its neck, but it quickly darted out of reach before sauntering back to once more stand in front of him.

He then had to blink his eyes to make sure they weren't playing tricks on him as the cat's form began to waver and change.



Unable to look away, Slade watched as a woman took the cat's place. Once the change was complete, the breath he hadn't known he'd been holding left his lungs in a whoosh.

The woman who now stood a few feet away made the blood in his body rush to his cock. It lengthened and grew rock hard as his gaze took in every inch of her. She had long, straight black hair that made his fingers itch to touch, to see if it felt as silky as it looked. Light brown eyes stared back at him as his gaze roamed over her face, a face that would put any supermodel to shame. Slade gazed lower as he felt his mouth go dry. She wore a form-fitting sheath-type dress held up only by two thin straps over her shoulders. The light blue material hugged her curves and was so sheer he could see right through it. His gaze lingered on her full breasts, which he suddenly ached to taste.

Before he realized what he was doing, Slade moved closer, invading her personal space. His heart raced as he breathed at a rapid pace. The same perfumed scent that matched the one in the jar seemed to surround her, drawing him even closer. His hands fisted at his sides as Slade fought the urge to yank her to him. He stared down at her. She barely reached his shoulder.

She smiled up at him. Slade felt his cock jerk inside his pants. Lust like he hadn't ever felt for another woman surged through his body. All he could think of was how soon he could get her under him, his aching cock between her legs.

He gave his head a shake as he tried to form a coherent thought instead of thinking how good it would feel to be inside her. "Who...who are you? *What* are you?"

She took a step closer. Slade looked at her breasts where they brushed against his chest. Her nipples had tightened into little buds that begged him to drag his tongue across them. It took all his willpower not to do just that.

"I am Bast. As for what I am, I'm yours." She spoke with a heavy accent.

At her words, his heart tried to beat out of his chest. His cock seemed to harden even more as it nestled against her belly. His chest rapidly rose and fell as he drew

more of her perfumed scent into his lungs. His body started to shake as the need to touch her, kiss her, almost overtook him.

"You're Bast? The *Egyptian goddess* Bast?" A part of Slade found that hard to believe. But how else could he explain how she'd been able to shift from a cat to the gorgeous woman who stood before him?

Bast placed a hand on his chest. "I have the feeling you don't believe I'm speaking the truth." She shifted to the side so she could look around him. "But my perfume jar sits on your table."

Slade fisted his hands tighter. As Bast moved against him it took every ounce of restraint he possessed not to pull her down to the floor. "*Your* perfume jar?" He knew he sounded as if he didn't have a brain in his head by repeating everything she said, but Slade counted himself lucky to be able to speak with all his blood flooding into his cock.

"Yes, my jar. Now that you have removed the lid, I am able to walk in the mortal realm."

A tremor shook his body as Bast placed her other hand on him and ran both along his chest. She explored the contours of his body as she stared at him with her bottom lip between her teeth. His arousal ratcheted up another notch. He didn't know how much more he could take before he finally broke and put his hands all over her.

"So let me get this straight. You're Bast—the *Egyptian goddess* Bast—and I somehow summoned you when I opened your perfume jar."

"Yes."

"And you're mine?"

"Yes, as you are mine."

"Mine as in..." Slade let his words trail away as Bast inched a hand down his stomach to the top of his jeans.

"As in yours to take pleasure with."

## **Chapter Two**

Bast ran her finger along the top of the leg coverings the mortal wore. She had told him her name but he had yet to share his. Not that she minded. There would be plenty of time for her to learn it after they had made love. All that mattered to her was the fact that he was her mate. She had recognized him as such when he had first removed the lid from her jar. Even though he had replaced it seconds later, it had given her enough time to recognize his scent. And a part of her she had long thought dead had awoken, making her feel more alive. Further proof she'd found her mate. When her gaze had met his, she knew he had been meant for her.

Pressing her body to his, Bast rubbed against his erection. She felt wetness pool between her legs as her pussy ached to be filled. His scent, masculine and all his own, only added to her arousal. She had thought he would have at least kissed her by now. It wasn't as if he didn't want her. The feel of his cock nestled against her stomach proved he wanted her very much, but for some reason he held back.

Now that she had taken human form in the mortal realm, Bast knew her days were limited. A few days at best. That being the case, she knew she would force him to act soon. Now that she had found him, she didn't want to waste what little time remained.

He swallowed audibly. "Pleasure sounds good."

Bast let her gaze run over him. She found his deep blue eyes heavy lidded with arousal. His dark blond hair he wore on the longish side. The ends just touched the collar of his short-sleeved tunic. Shifting her gaze lower, she took in his broad shoulders and muscular chest. Her tongue came out and licked her lips as her gaze swept over the large bulge in his pants.

Looking him in the face, Bast went up on her tiptoes and brushed her lips across his. Her mate was tall, at least six foot three, which she liked. "Then what are you waiting for?" she asked in a breathy voice.

Instead of answering her question, he asked one of his own. "Do you make it a habit of sleeping with men who open your jar? You don't even know me."

"No. Only you. Tell me your name. Then we won't be strangers." Bast threaded her fingers through the hair at the back of his neck and pulled his head down as she rose up on her toes once more. This time she swirled her tongue inside his ear.

His body shook as he made a low moan of pleasure. "My name is Slade."

Bast gently nipped the side of his neck. "There. Now we know each other's names. Is there anything else that holds you back from touching me, or do you not want me?" She pressed her lips against the hollow of his throat just above the edge of his tunic.

With a groan, Slade's arms came around her and held her tighter against him. "I want you."

As if he no longer had the will to hold back, Slade claimed her lips in a fiery kiss. He pushed his tongue past them and thoroughly tasted her. Bast moaned with pleasure as Slade slanted his mouth over hers, deepening the kiss. Desire pulsed through her body. No man had ever been able to arouse her to such heights with just a kiss. The taste of him, the feel of him pressed against her, made the ache between her legs intensify. Threading her fingers through Slade's hair, Bast increased the pressure of her lips.

Slade's hands drifted down to her bottom. He cupped it in both hands, lifting her so he could grind his erection against her sex. Bast tightened her grip on his hair as wetness leaked between her legs. She would have wound them around his waist and rode his cock through his leg coverings, but the tightness of her dress wouldn't allow it.

Lifting her higher, Slade carried her to a long, cushioned piece of furniture. After he put her down, he lay on his side next to her and threw a leg over hers. He cupped her breast in his hand as he trailed his lips along her jaw and down the column of her neck.

Bast bunched the material of his tunic in her hands and pulled it up his back. Slade quickly lifted himself and yanked the tunic over his head. She skimmed her hands over the thick slabs of muscle padding his chest. Her fingers then trailed down the ridged muscles of his stomach as she arched up and dragged her tongue across one of his flat nipples. Slade's eyes closed to half-mast as he groaned.

Slade settled down on top of Bast as he licked and kissed a path from her neck to the top of her chest. Inching down the cushions, he cupped a breast before he laved her taut nipple through her dress. When he lightly took it between his teeth and bit down, Bast arched her back for more.

He tried to pull down the top of her dress but the straps held it in place. Slade ran his hands down her body, obviously looking for a way to remove it before he lifted his head. "I need to feel your skin next to mine. How do I take off your dress without ripping it off you?"

Bast smiled at Slade then willed her dress off her body. Slade's eyes widened for a split second before they grew heavy with arousal once more. They both moaned as the dress disappeared between them. Wanting to feel his naked skin against her, she willed his leg coverings away. Slade sucked in a breath as his cock pressed against her thigh. The feel of it pressed against her skin had Bast arching and taking her bottom lip between her teeth. Everything about her mate was large. Bast ached to have him buried deep inside her, but Slade made no move to enter her. Instead, he shifted lower on her body and thrust a leg between hers.

His tongue flicked across her nipple before he sucked it deep inside his mouth. As he sucked, Slade ran a caressing hand down her side and across her stomach. At her pussy, he dipped a finger between her slick folds. "You're so wet," he said with a groan. "I need to see if you taste as good as you smell."

Inching down her body, Slade kissed a path across her ribs and to her navel. His tongue swirled inside before he continued downward. Bast's hips rose up off the cushion as he placed featherlight kisses down the outside of her thigh and back up the

inside. She held her breath in anticipation as he kissed higher. The feel of his breath against her sex made her clutch the cushion. Needing more, Bast fisted her hands in his hair. "Slade," she panted.

In answer, Slade dragged his tongue along her pussy before he swirled it around her clit. Bast moaned as she rocked her hips against his mouth. Anchoring her hips in place with one hand, he spread her folds with the other as he set to work pleasuring her with his lips and tongue. Slade stiffened his tongue and jabbed it inside her core then Bast felt the pleasure mount as he sucked on her clit. A whimper slipped past her lips as her body coiled even tighter. She knew it wouldn't take much to send her over the edge. Pulling at his hair, desperate to have him inside her, she tried to get him to move higher.

"Slade, please."

With one last swipe of his tongue, he rose above her, the head of his cock pressed against her slick opening. Bast wrapped her legs around his waist as he pressed himself home. Sheathed to the hilt, Slade took her lips in a demanding kiss as he arched back then pushed his full length inside again. With his thickness buried deep, filling her to capacity, Bast squeezed her inner walls around his shaft. Slade pumped his hips faster as he increased their pace. It had been so long since she had let a man inside her body, but nothing compared to the feel of being joined to her mate.

Gripping Slade's shoulders, Bast's hips met his thrusts. She angled herself in just the right way so his pelvic bone rubbed her clit. Her release built and built until she finally fell over the edge. Moaning as intense pleasure washed through her, Bast felt her inner walls clutch at Slade's cock, fisting it tight. As the last wave hit, Slade cupped her bottom and rammed into her. His body stiffened as he pushed inside one final time. Burying his face in her neck, he groaned as his cock pulsed inside her, filling her with his cum.

Bast wrapped her arms around Slade and held him tight as they both fought to catch their breath. Their bodies still joined, she didn't want to ever move again. Once

their breathing evened out, Slade propped himself up on his elbows. He gently brushed his lips against hers.

His dark blue eyes stared down at her as he followed the contours of her face. "Are you really here or are you just a figment of my imagination? If you're a dream, I don't want to ever wake up."

Bast pushed a lock of hair off his forehead. "I'm really here."

Slade kissed the tip of her nose. "I'm still having a hard time getting my head around this. I never would have thought in a million years that you really existed. Nor did I ever think I would make love to an Egyptian goddess."

"Oh, I am real. I've just been forgotten."

"I wouldn't say you've been completely forgotten." Slade glanced over at the jar that sat on the coffee table. "Not when we have so many reminders of you and the other gods."

Bast focused on her jar. It had long been the bane of her existence. Bound to it, the immortal realm now her prison, she hated that she couldn't free herself. More so now that she had found her mate. How could she leave him? She knew the jar wouldn't give her the choice.

"What's the matter?" Slade asked.

She pasted on a smile as she turned her gaze to him. His brows had drawn together, a concerned expression on his face. She gently ran her fingers along his jaw. Bast made the decision right there not to tell Slade exactly what he meant to her. It would only make him feel their separation more when her stay here ended. But he did need to know about her connection to the jar. She didn't want it to end up in another's hands.

"Do you remember how I said you summoned me when you removed the lid from my perfume jar?"

"Yes."

"The only reason you can summon me this way is because I'm bound to the jar. Only when a mortal removes the lid can I walk in the mortal realm."

"Only then?"

"Yes. Hundreds of years ago I had a run-in with a demon, a powerful demon. I was unable to defeat him, but in the end I managed to hurt him. In vengeance, he bound me to the jar. I'm unable to come to the mortal realm unless summoned."

"Why would he do that?"

"I am the goddess of protection. It has always been my sacred duty to look out for the mortals of this realm, especially the women and children. I've always felt a connection to mortals because of it. The demon knew I could no longer do my duty if I couldn't come here of my own free will."

Slade ran a finger along her cheek. "Then I guess I'd better make sure I never put the lid back on. That way you can stay here as long as you want."

Bast sadly shook her head. "It doesn't work that way. I will only remain in this realm for three days from the time the lid has been removed."

"And when the time is up?"

"I'll be sent back to the immortal realm, trapped in my prison once again."

"Then I'll just have to open the jar again to bring you back."

"That won't work. The same mortal cannot summon me more than once. Another mortal would have to own my jar and open it."

Slade took her lips in a searing kiss. When he lifted his head, they both panted for breath. Her body stirred to life. "Now that I know the connection between you and the jar, I don't like the idea of another coming anywhere near it. It's mine, just as you belong to me."

Bast closed her eyes as she pulled Slade's head down for a kiss. His possessiveness made her heart soar. Even though he didn't know what they meant to each other, a part



of him acknowledged her as his mate. Not wanting to think about what she would have to leave behind, Bast kissed him for all she was worth.

As she sucked on his tongue, she felt his cock lengthen and harden inside her. The feel and taste of him made a part of her, the part of her soul he had awakened, want to crawl under his skin and never leave. With each touch, each kiss, the connection between them grew stronger. Her body wept for his, aching to join with the one person who made her whole. This time she wanted to control their lovemaking. Bast lifted herself on one elbow and pushed against Slade's chest as she urged him upright. His cock slipped free of her body as he shifted position. Bast quickly moved to straddle his lap.

Looking down, she saw his cock jutting between them. With the tip of her finger, Bast circled its head before she moved to the shaft and stroked her fingers down his length. Slade moaned as she wrapped her hand around his thickness and slowly pumped. She loved the feel of him. He felt silky and hard at the same time. Arousal started to build deep inside her pussy. She wanted every inch of his cock to fill her, to stretch her, but she continued to work her hand up and down. Slade's pleasure was her pleasure as well.

Slade held onto her hips as he tried to urge her higher onto her knees. "I need to be inside you, Bast," he gasped. "Now."

Bast rose. Slade leaned up, cupped her breast and sucked her nipple between his lips as she rubbed her pussy against his shaft. She positioned herself over his cock and slowly pushed down. Slade sucked harder as she took him to the hilt. Rocking her hips against his, she took him even deeper.

Setting a slow pace, she rode his shaft. Her inner walls clamped down around him, increasing the pleasure she felt. Releasing her nipple, he let his head fall back against the cushion. His hands took hold of her hips as he urged her to go faster, harder. He thrust into her, matching her strokes. With a moaning purr, Bast felt her climax

overtake her. As her inner walls clutched at his cock, Slade arched into her, lifting her off the couch as he climaxed.

Contented and satiated, Bast fell against Slade's chest. When his arms came around her to hold her close, she closed her eyes. She knew this was where she belonged.

\* \* \* \* \*

Slade looked down at the woman who lay snuggled against his side. It was very late and they were both in his bed. After they had made love for a second time on the couch he had moved them upstairs. They'd already made love twice more. He couldn't seem to get enough of Bast. He put his nose against her dark hair and took a deep breath. The scent of her perfume filled his senses. It was one scent he knew he would never forget. It would be permanently etched in his brain.

His eyes started to droop. Slade forced them open. He didn't want to sleep. Even though Bast slept next to him, he wanted to stay awake as long as he could. He found it hard to shake the feeling she would disappear as quickly as she had come.

He still couldn't believe she was real, or how quickly she had wormed her way under his skin. Not one to believe in love at first sight, Slade couldn't quite discount it either, given how strongly he felt for Bast. *Can I fall in love with her this fast?* Yes, the sex between them could best be described as mind-blowing, but that didn't necessarily mean he'd fallen in love. Fallen in lust, yes, but love? Whether it was love or lust, Slade knew his feelings for Bast were new. He didn't want to give her up.

Slade silently snorted to himself. He finally found the woman he thought, if given time, could be the one for him only to eventually lose her in the end. If he could find a way to free Bast from the jar then maybe they would have a chance to live happily ever after.

Yeah, right. Like he knew anything about demons and binding spells. It wasn't as if he would find anything in the phone book. He highly doubted any of the psychics he'd find there would possess any real powers.

His eyes grew heavier and he let them drift shut. He really did need to sleep. The store wouldn't open itself tomorrow. Unable to fight it any longer, he gave up the battle.

\* \* \* \* \*

The beeping of his alarm clock jolted Slade awake after too few hours of sleep. He groaned as he rubbed his eyes. Thankful today was the start of the weekend and that the store closed early, he turned his head to see if his alarm clock had disturbed Bast. When he found the spot next to him empty, he stiffened. *Where did she go?* Slade tested the sheets where she had lain beside him during the night. They were cool to the touch. Bolting upright, he scanned the room only to find Bast wasn't anywhere.

Jerking on a pair of pajama bottoms, Slade headed downstairs to where the jar still sat on the coffee table. He told himself not to overreact as he pounded down the stairs. At the entrance to the living room, he skidded to a stop. A wave of relief washed over him as he took in the sight that met his eyes. Bast, once again dressed in her sheer, tight blue dress, sat on the couch as she watched television, of all things. Hearing him arrive, she looked away from the television and smiled.

Not caring that he'd probably come across as a desperate teenager with his first girlfriend, Slade crossed the room, picked Bast up off the couch and kissed her deeply. When he released her lips, he pulled her into a hard hug.

Bast hugged him back and laughed. "Good morning to you as well, Slade. I must say I like the way you greet me after you have slept."

Slade let her slide down his body as he put her down on her feet. He gave her a half-smile. "Sorry if I come across a little bit too exuberant this morning. When I woke up and you weren't in bed, I thought maybe you'd returned to the immortal realm. I'll admit I panicked. I really, really don't want you to go."

Bast cupped Slade's cheek in her hand. "It's I who should apologize. I only require a couple hours of sleep each night, so I came down here after I awoke. I guess I could

have written you a note to tell you where I would be, but I don't think you would be able to read Egyptian hieroglyphs. And I can't read or write your English."

"No, I can't read Egyptian hieroglyphs," Slade said with a chuckle. "I'm surprised you can't read or write English. You speak it so well."

"I have the ability to speak in a new language once I've heard it spoken, but I still would have to learn how to write it."

Before Slade could say anything in response, his phone started to ring. Wondering who could be calling him so early in the day, he hurried to the kitchen to answer the phone. "Hello?"

"Is this Slade Nelson?" The voice on the other end of the line spoke English with the same accented voice as Bast.

"Yes, this is he."

"I'm Detective Barad of the Cairo police."

Slade felt a chill of unease run down his spine. "What can I do for you, Detective?"

"I'm calling about Frank Thompson."

"What about him?"

"I'm sorry to have to tell you he was found murdered this morning in his hotel room. We could only find your phone number in his personal effects."

Slade had to take a deep breath to steady himself before he could reply. "Frank didn't have any family. I'm as close to family as he had."

"You're also his business partner, correct?"

"Yes. We own an antique store here in Toronto. Do you have any idea who could have done this?"

"Not yet, but we are working on a few leads. I understand he sent some items to your store shortly after he arrived in Egypt."

Bast came up behind him and wrapped her arms around his waist. Slade placed his hand over hers. "Yes. He sent me some antique jars. They weren't ancient Egyptian

artifacts, if that's what you're wondering." Except for Bast's perfume jar, but he wasn't about to tell the detective that.

"Do you know where he purchased the jars?"

"I'm not sure. I didn't notice a sales receipt or anything like that in the crate, but to be honest it didn't arrive until late in the day yesterday so I didn't have much time to really look for one. I will be going to the store a little later. If you give me a phone number where I can reach you, I'll call you if I find one."

Slade reached for the pen and paper he kept on the counter next to the phone. He quickly wrote down the phone number Detective Barad gave him. After he promised to call the detective back later, Slade hung up the phone. He let out a puff of breath as he thought about Frank. He also realized he hadn't asked the detective how Frank had died, or what arrangements he needed to make to have Frank's body returned to Canada. Slade would have to ask those things when he called back.

Bast moved to stand in front of him, a look of concern on her face. "Did something happen?"

He nodded. "The man who sent me your jar was found dead in his hotel room this morning. The Egyptian police think he was murdered. Frank was my business partner, as well as a very good friend."

Slade wanted to punch his fist through a wall. His emotions bounced from anger to sorrow and back to anger again. It was so unfair. Frank was the same age as a he—thirty. His friend had still had a lifetime left. Slade hoped the police caught whoever killed him and locked the asshole behind bars for the rest of his life.

Bast put her arms around him and hugged him close. "I'm so sorry."

Holding Bast against him, Slade kissed the top of her head. "I have to open the store soon. And I have to see if I can find some information the detective wanted. I don't want to leave you here alone. Would you like to come with me?"

"Of course I want to come." Bast stepped out of the circle of his arms. "I am ready to leave whenever you are."

Slade looked Bast up and down. Her dress was perfect for inside his house, but it revealed all too much of her body for outside. The only man allowed to see that much of her delectable body was him. "Um, I really hate to say this, because I do love the way you look in your dress, but you're not stepping outside like that."

Bast looked down at her body. "I'm covered, am I not?"

"Ah, yes and no. Let's just say it isn't appropriate wear for Canada. You need something a little less...see-through."

A smile tugged at Bast's lips. "I understand. I've been watching the box with pictures. I think I know what would be appropriate."

In a blink of an eye, Bast stood dressed in a pair of tight short-shorts and a barely there tank top, which didn't have a bra under it. Slade gulped at the sight. If anything, Bast looked even hotter in that outfit. It also made him wonder what exactly she had been watching on the TV while he slept.

"Ah, almost. You could wear this, but then I would have to beat the crap out of any man who looked your way."

Bast shook her head with a smile. "We can't have that."

"No, we can't."

Remembering the pile of advertisement flyers he had yet to throw in the recycle bin, Slade took Bast by the hand and led her back to the living room. He pulled the pile of flyers from the open bottom of the coffee table and flipped through them until he found some that advertised women's clothing. Soon Bast wore a lightweight, flower-print, sleeveless dress with strappy, low-heeled sandals. She even wore a bra and panties underneath. Slade knew because she had willed those on her body first before the dress. The sight of her only in a bra and panties made Slade wish he had time to take her upstairs and make love to her once again.

After Bast did a little spin, Slade nodded his head in approval. "Perfect. Now I have to go upstairs and change. I won't be a minute."

Before he could head for the stairs, Bast said, "Let me."

His pajama bottoms disappeared. When the seconds ticked by and no clothes appeared on his body, Slade looked at Bast. The heated look she gave him made the words he was about to say catch in his throat. He also got an instant hard-on. When she licked her lips while staring at his cock, Slade groaned. "If you keep staring at me like that we'll never get out of here, Bast."

Her eyes jerked to his face. "I'm sorry. After I willed your pants away I realized I did not know what you wear to your store."

Slade resisted the urge to yank her into his arms and take her down to the floor. There would be plenty of time to do that later. "How about I just go upstairs and get dressed the normal way. It'll be less time consuming." Before he could change his mind, Slade hurried up the stairs to dress.

## Chapter Three

Slade saw the drive to his store in a whole new light when seen through Bast's eyes. She ohhed and ahhed at the scenery outside the car windows. When they reached Bloor Street, where his store was situated, her eyes widened as she took in the busy sights and sounds. As for the car ride itself, Bast seemed to have no reservations about it right from the time he had helped her inside.

Parking in front of the store, Slade came around and helped Bast out. He kept his fingers linked with hers as he led her to the front door. Since he wanted time to search the crate before he opened the store, he locked the door behind them once they stepped inside. The crate sat near the counter at the back of the store, where he'd left it.

Bast fingered the three other jars that sat on the counter as Slade dug through the packing material. At the very bottom he found a sheet of paper folded in half. Slade unfolded it and had to take a deep breath as he stared down at Frank's handwriting. At first he couldn't bring himself to read what his friend had written, but when Bast moved closer and the scent of her perfume swirled around him, he managed to get it together enough to focus.

As he read through Frank's note, he summarized it for Bast. "It looks as if Frank bought your jar and the others from a local market. He also says here that the owner of the small store was quite insistent Frank buy your jar when he found out he planned to ship them to Canada. At first Frank refused, but when the owner quoted him a price for all four jars he couldn't pass up, he changed his mind."

"Does he give the name of the place where he purchased them?"

Slade nodded. "Yes. He also has the name of the store owner. I'd better call the detective and let him know what I found. Cairo is six hours ahead of us and I don't want to wait until it's too late in the day over there."



Bast wandered around the store and looked at all the items he had on display as he made the call to Detective Barad. By the end of the conversation, Slade felt as if his stomach were tied in knots. The detective had been very interested in the information Slade had give him; he'd also revealed more facts about Frank's cause of death. Just the thought of what his friend had to have endured during his final moments made Slade feel sick to his stomach. But a real chill of fear ran through his body as he turned his gaze on Bast.

She made her way back to him once he'd hung up the phone. Her brows drew together as her gaze landed on his face. "Something the detective said has unsettled you."

Slade wrapped his arms around Bast's waist and pulled her closer as he gazed down at her. "The detective was familiar with the name of the man who sold Frank the jars. The man was murdered a day before Frank. Apparently they both died the same way. When their bodies were found, it looked as if someone had hacked them to pieces." He paused for a second before he told her the rest. "The detective said another man was also killed in the same way, and he could be traced back from the man who sold the jars to Frank. They think this man took something from a temple ruin called Bubastis, which could have led to his death. Before he died, the police think he sold whatever he had found to the owner of the store, who in turn could have sold it to Frank."

As he spoke, Bast's face grew pallid. She gazed at him with real fear in her eyes. "Bubastis at one time was my city of worship, where mortals came to pay homage to me. After the demon bound me to the jar, he said it would be hidden where no mortal would find it. He must have hidden it somewhere inside my temple."

"Well, it was obviously found by the first man who was murdered or Frank wouldn't have ended up with it."

"He knows it has been found," Bast said softly.

"Who knows?"

"The demon. He knows. He is the one who killed your friend and the other two men. He's following the trail of my jar. He'll hunt you next."

That thought had crossed Slade's mind when he had been on the phone with the detective. If the demon had been behind the killings, and able to track where Bast's jar had gone each time, the demon would more than likely be able to trace it the store, or to his home. Slade had no knowledge about demons, but he didn't plan to just sit around and wait for the thing to show up to kill him.

Slade placed his hand under Bast's chin and forced her to look him directly in the eyes. "Now is not the time to panic. You've dealt with this demon before."

"Yes, but he defeated me."

"Tell me about that encounter. Did you fight him hand to hand? Or did you fight another way?"

"When he first attacked, he tried to subdue me physically. I escaped his clutches with one of my powers."

"What power?"

"I shot him with a bolt of energy. It didn't kill him, but it did weaken him. Before I could hit him with another, he flashed himself back to the demon realm in the underworld."

"Then what happened?"

"He came back. He entrapped me before I became aware of his presence. This time he came prepared with a binding spell. Before I could gather my powers, he'd completed the spell and I became bound to the perfume jar, unable to either leave my chambers in the immortal realm or walk in the mortal one."

"Can the demon be killed like a mortal?"

"Yes, but you aren't a warrior. You wouldn't be able to defeat him in a fight."

Slade smiled. "I may not be a warrior, but I do have a weapon that will stop him nonetheless. It's called a gun. I don't just collect antiques. I also have a gun collection.

As long as the demon isn't bulletproof I'll be able to take care of him with one of my guns."

Bast shook her head. "It's too risky. Maybe you should try to send me back to the immortal realm. Today. If the demon comes and he thinks you haven't opened my jar, maybe he'll take it and leave you alone. Replacing the lid on the jar should still send me back, even though it has been off for a while now."

"I won't do it. I'm not giving you up any earlier than I have to. And what do you mean you *think* if I replace the lid it will send you back? Don't you know?"

"You are the first mortal to open my jar since the demon bound me. I don't know what will happen if the lid is replaced before my days here are over, now that I have been here almost a day."

"I don't understand. If I'm the first to open your jar, how do you know how long you have here? And that once you leave I can't summon you for a second time?"

"Those stipulations were part of his spell. I guess he felt he needed them in case my jar was ever found."

Slade brushed his lips across hers. "I won't do it. I won't give you up. Not even for a demon."

Bast shook her head as a look of dread crossed her face. "He will come. Be it today or the next, he will come for my jar. And then you will die."

"We'll figure this out, Bast. For now, I think it best that I close the shop for the day. All my guns are at home. If this demon does show up, I think between your powers and my gun we should be able to take care of him." When Bast began to say something, Slade interrupted. "I know you're afraid, but I'm not going to let the demon spoil the time we have left." Bast sighed then nodded.

Slade pulled Bast close. Seeing the very real fear she had for the demon did have him worried, more than he had let on. He was a man. He should be able to protect his woman, but Slade knew realistically that may not be possible.

Who was he kidding? Bast was an immortal Egyptian goddess and she had lost the first time in the end. If it came down to a fight, he hoped he survived long enough to at least keep the demon from taking the jar.

\* \* \* \* \*

As he had suggested, Slade closed the store. This morning, he had originally thought to take her out to eat before they returned back to his house, but on the drive back home he learned Bast didn't eat. Ever. Nor did she have to drink water. That pretty much put a damper on treating her to a nice meal.

Back at his place, Slade went upstairs to his bedroom to change out of his work clothes. Bast remained downstairs. She'd been awfully quiet since leaving the store. And when he said he was going to his room, she'd just nodded and gone into the living room. Slade had hoped she would follow him upstairs. Being around Bast, with the smell of her intoxicating perfume in his nose, he was walking around the majority of the time semi-aroused.

He wanted her again. She was like an addiction. Thoughts of her constantly filled his head. The very idea of losing her made him feel as if he would lose a piece of himself. She was everything he wanted in a woman.

Slade changed before he went to his closet. He reached to the very back of the top shelf and pulled out the heavy, fireproof metal lockbox where he kept his guns. The bullets were locked in another one, which he took out as well. Placing both lockboxes on the bed, he moved to his dresser and dug around in his underwear drawer for the keys to unlock them.

He sat on the bed as he unlocked the boxes. Choosing the smaller semi-automatic, he grabbed some bullets and loaded the gun. With that done, Slade locked both boxes before returning them to the shelf inside his closet and hiding the keys back in his dresser drawer.

Slade returned to the bed and picked up the gun. He pulled back on the slide then released it to load the first round into the chamber, the gun now ready to be fired. As he checked to make sure the safety was still on, Bast's arms wound around his chest from behind. He hadn't heard her come upstairs.

He turned his head to the side and looked over his shoulder, where she knelt behind him. "Did you get lonely down there by yourself?"

"Maybe just a little."

Slade shivered as Bast nibbled his earlobe. "Is that so? Well, I can fix that."

Bast shoved her hands up his t-shirt and ran them across his chest. She tugged at his nipples before she trailed her hands down across his abs. Slade sat still as she continued downward. He sucked in a breath when her hand took hold of his cock. He grew hard as she caressed him through his sweat pants. With her every touch, the hold she had over him seemed to grow stronger. She had become his addiction. Her taste, the feel of her bare skin, the smell of her intoxicating perfume drugged him. Reaching behind him, Slade cupped the back of Bast's head as he took her lips in a heated kiss. Their tongues met when he pushed his way inside. The taste of her on his tongue pushed his arousal to even greater heights.

Fully aroused, Slade pulled away from Bast and put the gun on the small bedside table. He turned back to see her watching him through heavy-lidded eyes. Her cheeks were flushed pink with arousal. As he watched, her tongue came out and licked her lips as her gaze slid down to the crotch of his sweatpants.

Slade's heart began to race. He still had a hard time believing this beautiful woman, this goddess, was his for the taking. Each time they made love he felt as if she touched a part of him that had never been touched before. She had become a necessity, something he didn't want to live without. With a jerk, he yanked his t-shirt over his head and let it drop to the floor before he once again joined Bast on the bed.

Slade crowded her until she fell back on the mattress. He straddled her legs and placed his hands on either side of her head as he held his body above hers. Bast

wrapped her hands around his neck and pulled his head down until their lips met. As he nibbled and sucked at her mouth, Slade worked on the buttons that ran down the front of her dress. This time he wanted to undress her a little bit at a time, and kiss every inch of skin he bared until he could no longer think straight.

Once he had the buttons undone, he settled beside her as he slowly pushed the top of Bast's dress over her shoulders and partway down her arms. Leaving her mouth, Slade nibbled his way down her chin to her collarbone, where he dragged his tongue across her skin. Bast moaned as she tried to lift her arms, but the dress prevented it.

He pressed his lips lower until he reached the top of the pale blue, lacy bra that covered her breasts. Slade pressed his lips to the tops of them. Bast squirmed beside him as she tried to free her arms. To stop her, he threw one of his legs over hers and shifted so he lay half on top her.

Bast groaned. "I want to touch you, Slade."

"Not yet," he breathed against her skin.

Slade returned his attention to her breasts. With the flat of his tongue, he laved each of her nipples through the lace. Bast's breaths grew choppy as he gently took one of the taut peaks between his teeth and tugged. He moved to the other and did the same before he undid the front clasp of her bra. Parting the lacy material, he swirled his tongue around a nipple, then sucked it deep inside his mouth while he rolled the other between his index finger and thumb. Bast's hips jerked as she panted.

Aroused almost to the point of pain, Slade ignored the clamoring of his body and pushed the dress down Bast's arms. Now able to lift them, she threaded her fingers through his hair and held him to her breast as he continued to suck on her nipple. Slade lifted his head as he pushed her dress the rest of the way off. Bast quickly got rid of her unhooked bra by throwing it to the floor.

Slade watched her face as he let his hand glide down her flat stomach to the top of her lace panties. Bast took her bottom lip between her teeth as he stroked a finger along her pussy and he couldn't hold back the moan that escaped him when he found her wet

and ready. Hooking her panties in his fingers, he pulled them down her legs. Bast kicked them away.

Bast urged Slade onto his back. "My turn to torture you."

Slade's cock jerked in his pants. "Will I enjoy it?"

She straddled his hips as she pressed her pussy against his erection and smiled. "Most definitely."

Slade soon lost the ability of speech as Bast dragged her nails down his chest. Her lips and tongue soon followed the same path. She pressed kisses across his abs as she inched down his body. He lifted his hips off the mattress when she took hold of the waistband of his sweatpants and yanked them down just past his hips. Since he hadn't worn any underwear, his cock sprang free. Bast licked her lips as she pulled his sweats down his legs and off. Slade gripped the sheets under him to prevent himself from yanking her into his arms, rolling her onto her back and ramming into her.

Bast moved to straddle his thighs once again. She wrapped her hand around his cock and pumped it up and down. Slade couldn't tear his eyes away as she bent and licked a bead of pre-cum off the head of his shaft. His chest rapidly rose and fell, the sound of his moans filling the room as Bast circled the head of his cock with her tongue before she opened her mouth wide to suck him inside. Slade thought he saw stars appear before his eyes as her lips closed over him.

She kept a firm grip on the base of his shaft as she sucked more of his cock into the moist confines of her mouth. He lifted his hips off the bed, urging her to take more of his length. Burying his hands in her hair, he held her in place. Bast greedily took as much of him as she could handle.

Slade fought to keep himself from coming. "God, I love the way you suck. But if you don't stop now this will be over before we've even begun."

Bast swirled her tongue around the tip of his cock one last time before she rose to her knees. With one hand still wrapped around the base of his shaft, she slowly lowered herself down onto it. Slade clenched his jaw for control as her wet inner walls wrapped

around him. When she started to move, a strangled gasp broke past his lips. His blood roared in his ears. Her breasts bounced as she rode him, her face a mask of pleasure, and her strong muscles squeezed his shaft as he slid in and out of her. Letting his gaze travel down Bast's body, Slade watched her pussy take the full length of his cock. He grew even harder as he fought to hold back his release.

Bast moved faster, riding him harder. She threw back her head and moaned. Knowing she was close to her own release, Slade circled her clit with his finger. Her pussy clenched around his shaft as she came. Somehow he managed to hold back his climax. He wanted to make her come again before he found his own release.

Before he could roll Bast onto her back, she slipped off his body, moving to her hands and knees next to him. "I want you to take me this way when you come. I want you to take me as your mate."

Slade didn't waste any time as he shifted on the bed and knelt between Bast's spread thighs. Bending, he dragged his tongue up her spine as he positioned the head of his cock at her slick opening. With one thrust, he sheathed himself to the hilt. In this position she took more of him, and her passage gripped him like a tight fist. As he pumped his hips, he knew he wouldn't be able to last long. Bast pushed back as he rammed inside her. Wanting her to come when he did, he reached around and rubbed her clit.

With one hand on her hips as he continued to stimulate her clit, Slade pumped faster. Sweat ran down his back as he fought not to come, to wait for Bast, but he knew he couldn't hold off much longer. Already he felt his orgasm starting to build. Bast whimpered and moaned as her strong muscles clutched at his shaft and she found her release. It was enough to send Slade over the edge. Groaning with pleasure, he held her to him as he emptied his cock deep inside her core, giving her everything he had. As he fought to catch his breath, Slade wrapped his arm around Bast's waist then moved them both to their sides so he lay spooned against her back.



After not getting much sleep the night before, a sense of lethargy washed over Slade. He kissed the back of Bast's neck as he let his eyes drift shut. He just needed a quick nap then he would be ready to go again. With a sigh of contentment, he fell asleep.

## Chapter Four

Once again Slade awakened in bed alone. He rolled over and glanced at his alarm clock then swore under his breath. It was already after five in the afternoon. He'd slept for a hell of a lot longer than an hour. He hadn't expected to sleep that long. It only wasted time he could have spent with Bast. Throwing back the covers, Slade got up and gathered his clothes off the floor. Dressed, he picked up the handgun from the bedside table and shoved it into the back of his sweats before heading downstairs.

The smell of something delicious hit him before he reached the bottom of the stairs. Slade followed the smell to the kitchen. When he arrived, he drew up short. Bast stood by the kitchen table, which had enough food on it to feed an army.

She looked in his direction and gave him a tentative smile. "Good, you're awake. I thought you would be hungry when you woke up. I hope there is enough food."

Slade let his gaze pass over the kitchen table as he walked over to Bast. Roast chicken, a roast of beef, mashed potatoes, three kinds of vegetables and what looked to be both beef and chicken gravy. He seriously doubted he could put a dent in it, even with his big appetite.

He pulled Bast into his arms and kissed her lightly. "It smells delicious, and I *am* hungry. You made this all by yourself while I slept?"

She gave him a sheepish grin. "Not exactly. I used my powers instead of cooking. I've never cooked before. Is that all right?"

Slade smiled. "Of course it's all right. It means a lot that you would do this, especially when you don't eat."

"Well, I watched the box with pictures again while you slept and I saw a woman making food for her family. I thought I would do the same for you since you're my ma —"

"Since I'm your what?" Slade asked carefully.

Bast pulled out of his arms and shook her head. "Nothing. Why don't you eat before the food grows cold?"

Something Bast had said to him while they had been upstairs flitted through Slade's head. "I don't think it's nothing. Earlier, while we made love, you wanted me to take you as my mate. Is that what you were going to say, Bast? That I'm your mate?"

A look of sadness flashed across her face. "That was a slip on my part. I shouldn't have said it."

"Why? Because it's true?"

Bast sighed. "Yes. You are my mate. I've known it since the first time I appeared to you in my cat form. I didn't want to tell you."

Slade pulled Bast to him again. "Why? Were you afraid I wouldn't feel the same?"

Bast shook her head. "No. Since we are mates, destined to be together, I knew you would feel the same way. I just thought to keep it to myself so when I leave you won't have to hurt any more than you will."

He cupped her face in his hands and forced her to look up. "Whether you told me or not, it wouldn't make my feelings for you any less strong than they already are. I've fallen for you. Hard. Now that you've said we're mates, I know what I'm feeling is love...not just lust. In such a short amount of time, you've become a part of me. I don't want to give you up."

Bast blinked back tears. "I love you as well, Slade. It also makes me afraid. I'm afraid something will happen, that the demon who bound me will come for you. I don't want anything to happen to you."

"Enough talk about me getting hurt. I told you, I have a weapon that will stop the demon in his tracks." Slade pulled out the handgun. "This is a gun. It shoots metal projectiles very, very fast. Since you say the demon can be killed the same as a mortal, one bullet through his heart should end his miserable existence."

"I still think it is too risky." Bast stepped away from him until she stood with her back against the kitchen counter. "I have thought of another way to stop him, but eat first."

Sensing Bast wouldn't say anything more about her plan, Slade loaded up the plate she had set on the table. While he ate, he couldn't shake the feeling that he wouldn't like this new plan of Bast's. She looked too sad for it to be anything good.

\* \* \* \* \*

She didn't want her mate to die. The more time Bast spent with Slade, the more she had come to love him. She would rather be trapped in the immortal realm for all eternity than have to deal with the pain Slade's death would cause.

Not knowing if this *gun* Slade had showed her would actually kill the demon, Bast had to convince her mate to try to send her back. If he replaced the lid to send her back—since he owned the jar, he had to be the one to do so—she needed to make sure the demon couldn't harm Slade. Bast had committed the binding spell to memory hundreds of years ago. She repeated it in her head as she tried to find a way to break it, anything that would allow another spell to counteract its hold over her.

There was one thing she had thought would be the key to her freedom, but without the jar in her possession it had been impossible to test.

As Slade ate, Bast moved to sit at the kitchen table next to him. It gave her great pleasure to see him eat what she had prepared. She would have liked to share his meal, but her body had no need of food. Being a goddess, as well as immortal, food was unnecessary to sustain her life. Even if she were to gift Slade with immortality, he would still need to eat, drink and sleep as a mortal since she couldn't grant him godhood.

Bast sat up straighter. *Should I do it?* She hadn't thought about giving Slade immortality until now. If she had been able to stay with him indefinitely, of course she would have no problem asking him for his consent. Given the fact she would leave him

so soon after she had found him, Bast hadn't considered it. Now, with a good chance of the demon following her jar to Slade, she could at least do this to keep him safe. The demon wouldn't be able to harm Slade quite so easily if he was no longer mortal.

When Slade pushed his empty plate away, Bast stood up and held out her hand. Once he took it she led him to the living room and motioned for him to sit. Before she sat down next to him, she picked up her jar. She left the lid where it sat on the table.

Slade's gaze flicked to her jar before he looked into her eyes. "Okay, what is this new plan of yours?"

Bast took a deep breath. This would not be easy, but if it worked it would be worth it, no matter how much she would suffer afterward. "I want you to put the lid back on my jar and then smash it."

Before she had even finished speaking, Slade started to shake his head. "No. I told you before, I'm not going to send you back early just on the off chance it will save my hide. And I sure as hell won't smash that jar. If I do, I'll never have a chance to get you back."

"You must. I think it is the only way to stop the demon. I've gone over the spell he used to bind me. Not until today have I thought to test the one weakness in it. We can use it against him. When he performed the spell, he had to bind a small piece of his spirit to the jar as well. If you smash the jar, it may be enough to send him back to the underworld. That piece of his spirit will be destroyed along with the jar. It could be enough to keep him from ever being able to return to the mortal realm."

"And if I smash the jar, it may keep you a prisoner forever in your chambers in the immortal realm. Just because the jar is no more doesn't mean it will break the spell."

"There is a small chance it will. Either way, it's a chance I'm willing to take."

"But it isn't one I will. Say it doesn't send him back to the underworld; he'll still come after me. I know it. You know it."

Bast placed her hand on Slade's thigh. "That's why I want to make you immortal."

Slade searched her face. "You can do that? You can really give me immortality?"

"Yes."

He seemed to think it over, but shook his head again. "No. What good is being immortal if I can't spend eternity with you?"

Bast closed her eyes briefly as she steeled herself for what she had to do next. "I can always *make* you do what I have asked."

"I'll never willingly do it no matter how hard you try to convince me."

"I wouldn't be forcing you with words, Slade."

To show her mate exactly what she meant, Bast looked deeply into his dark blue eyes. She then planted the suggestion that he pick up the lid from her jar. A look of strain settled on Slade's face as he fought against her command. In the end, he found himself holding the lid.

His eyes went hard. "If you love me, you will *never* do that again."

"It is *because* of the love I have for you that I will do it if needs be."

Slade thumped the lid down on the coffee table and slowly stood up. He looked down at her as hurt and anger played across his face. "I'll be up in the shower. I can't be around you right now."

Without another word, he turned and headed for the stairs. Bast closed her eyes as a tear ran down her face. Somehow she had to convince Slade to see things her way.

## Chapter Five

Slade stood under the showerhead and let the warm water pound against his chest. Hurt and anger vied with one another. He felt hurt that Bast would actually use her powers to force him to do something he felt so strongly against. He also felt angry that she would go to such lengths to do what she thought would save him. Wasn't he supposed to be the one to protect *her*? Yes, as an Egyptian goddess, Bast had powers he didn't have...but he still wanted to be the one to look out for her.

His anger drained away as he realized he was being a jackass. Just being a man in no way made him able to protect Bast. Since he couldn't shoot energy bolts he knew she could do more than he could with his gun. She had fought this demon before. She knew what he was capable of more than he did.

Slowly he turned so his back faced the showerhead. Slade closed his eyes and titled his head under the spray of water—then just about jumped out of his skin as a pair of hands ran up his chest. Blinking the water from his eyes, he opened them to find Bast. The sight of her naked body, so close to his, made his cock grow hard. No matter how many times he made love to this woman, Slade knew she would always have this effect on him.

Bast smoothed her hands across his chest. "You win. I won't force you, but I need a promise."

To still her movements, he placed his hands over hers. "And that would be?"

She looked at him, her light brown eyes locking with his dark blue ones. "Promise me that if the demon comes and your gun does not work, you will smash the jar so he can't take it. Please."

Slade didn't want to, but he knew he would promise. The idea of the demon gaining possession of Bast's jar, and what he might do with it, made Slade cringe. He slowly nodded. "But only as a last resort."

"Only as a last resort." Bast stood on her tiptoes and leaned in until her lips were a mere hairbreadth away. "Make love to me, Slade. I need you inside me."

Closing what little distance remained between them, Slade covered Bast's mouth with his own. He couldn't resist her. He might as well try to stop breathing. His tongue dueled with hers as he ground his erect cock against her. Bast moaned against his mouth. With the sound of her moans in his ears, Slade turned and placed her under the spray. He let his hand skim down her water-slick body. Molding his hands to her bottom, he lifted her. Bast wrapped her legs around his waist so her pussy rested against his cock, her hands gripping his shoulders.

Just like that, intense need pounded through his body. No other woman made him ache for her so quickly. Only Bast. The need to claim her, possess her, mark her as his pounded through his body. Slade turned and took the two steps that brought Bast up against the cool tile of the shower wall. Her eyes were closed, her lips puffy from his kisses. A trickle of water ran down her chest. Slade watched it collect on the tip of her nipple before it dripped down her stomach. Bending his head, he caught the next bead of water with his tongue. Bast arched as she pressed her breast against his lips.

He took what she offered. He opened his mouth and sucked her nipple deep inside. As he sucked, he shifted one hand so he could reach between their bodies, brushing two fingers against the opening of her sex. Bast's hips jerked as he pushed one and then a second inside. As her pussy clutched his fingers, he stroked her, making Bast moan. His cock grew harder as she tried to ride his fingers.

Slade released her breast and removed his fingers from her passage. Bast whimpered with need as she rocked her hips against him. Unable to wait any longer, aching to make them one, he fisted his cock in one hand and led it to her wet opening. He gave her only the head as he held her hips in place when she tried to take more.



"I love you, Bast."

Her eyes blinked open. "And I love you, Slade."

With a moan of pleasure, he sheathed himself to the hilt. Hearing Bast say she loved him caused his heart to try to burst out of his chest. Those words were like music to his ears. And those three words were ones he had never said to another woman. She had become his world. Another would never take her place in his heart. Pulling back until he was almost free of her body, he rammed back inside her. Slade had thought to take it slow and easy but as soon as he entered that tight wetness, he couldn't stop himself from pounding into her. Bast didn't seem to mind. She locked her ankles around his back as her nails dug into his shoulders. A long moan left her as he slammed into her over and over again.

The sound of their wet bodies as they slapped together filled the shower. Cupping the twin globes of her bottom, Slade increased his pace. He felt his climax build. He angled his hips higher and rubbed his pelvic bone against Bast's clit. With the sound of her whimpers in his ears, he edged even closer to his release. Just as he fell over the precipice, Bast leaned forward and bit him where his shoulder and neck met. Her inner walls fisted his cock tightly as she came, which in turn extended his own climax.

Once he could breathe evenly, Slade let Bast down to her feet. She snuggled against his chest as he reached over and turned off the shower. After he got them both out of the bathtub, he grabbed the thick towel he'd placed on the counter and used it to dry Bast. He then used it on his own body.

Bast moved back into his arms once he was dry. "I'm sorry, Slade. I only thought to do what I thought would keep you safe. Can you—"

Slade placed a finger against her lips. "I know you did. No more apologies. I'm sorry too. I was a little ticked off with you at first, but I know you only did it because you care so much." He put his arm around her shoulders and led her back to his bedroom. "Let's get dressed and go downstairs to watch some television—the box with

the moving pictures in it. And let's not allow thoughts of the demon spoil the rest of our night together. Okay?"

Bast gave him a small smile. "Okay. I'd like that."

\* \* \* \* \*

She had to admit it was nice sitting beside Slade on the couch as they snuggled and watched the *television*. Slade had also explained the difference between reality TV and sitcoms. She found she enjoyed the reality TV more than the others that were make-believe. And she especially enjoyed the reality show where mortals had to race from one country to another.

As the night wore on, Bast let herself relax little by little. The gun sat on the couch next to Slade, well within his reach. Her jar once again sat on the table. She wanted to hope the demon wouldn't come, but deep down inside she knew he would. The big question was *when*. Bast hated the idea that she and Slade would be caught off guard. The gun may be able to defeat the demon, but if Slade couldn't use the weapon before the demon got the better of him, it wouldn't give him any kind of advantage.

When it finally grew so late that Slade seemed unable to keep his eyes open any longer, Bast decided they both needed to go upstairs to bed. She hadn't slept and knew she wouldn't have a problem doing so. This time she would stay in bed even after she awoke. Her final hours in the mortal realm were slowly coming to a close.

Slade's head fell to his chest as his eyes drifted shut. Bast gave him a gentle shake. "I think it's time we went to bed."

His head jerked up as he opened his eyes and gave her a sheepish grin. "I fell asleep, huh?"

She returned his smile. "Only for a few seconds."

"If I go to bed, will you come with me?"

"Yes. I'm feeling a bit tired."

"Good. I want you next to me when I sleep, even if it is only for a couple of hours."

Bast opened her mouth to tell Slade she would stay all night right next to him when a cold chill ran down her spine.

She sensed the sudden presence of evil.

Bast stiffened as she frantically searched the room. The chill could only mean one thing – the demon had at last found them.

Slade grabbed the gun and flipped what he called the *safety* off. “Bast, what is it?”

Before she could answer, the demon appeared before them.

At almost seven feet tall, heavy muscled, with long black hair that fell to his shoulders and dressed in an Egyptian-style linen kilt, at first glance he looked human. Only his red eyes gave him away. That along with the smell of fear and death that surrounded him like an ominous cloud. Bast felt an uncontrollable shiver of fear run through her.

The demon immediately backhanded her away from Slade and she flew to the other end of the couch. Slade lifted the gun in the demon’s direction but the beast swiftly batted it out of his hand before he could pull the trigger.

As the demon’s fist slammed into Slade’s face, Bast tamped down her fear as she gathered energy to her and hit the demon with an energy bolt. The demon crashed back onto the table with a roar of rage. His eyes glowed red as he quickly recovered and moved to launch himself at Slade once more.

She prepared to hit him with another energy bolt—but Slade threw himself at the demon.

Both of them hit the floor, with Slade on top. He got in a couple of good punches before the demon gained the upper hand and landed another punch in Slade’s face. Blood dripped from his nose and Bast bit back a scream. Afraid she would hit Slade if she threw another bolt, Bast could only watch as they fought. One of her bolts would kill Slade instantly if she hit him by mistake. It was as if she were living a nightmare.

Moving swiftly to see if she could hit the demon from another angle without endangering Slade, Bast felt her foot connect with something cold and metallic. She looked down to find the gun at her feet. Slade had shown her how to fire it. She knew all she needed to do was pull the trigger...

Bast's hands shook as she picked up the gun and pointed it in the demon's direction.

With a deep breath, she aimed for the demon's back and squeezed. The gun went off with a loud bang, but the bullet didn't hit its mark. Instead, it buried itself in the floor next to the two combatants.

As she prepared to take a second shot, a large dagger suddenly appeared in the demon's hand—and she cried out as he buried it into Slade's stomach.

With a scream of denial, Bast pulled the trigger again. This time the bullet grazed the demon's arm as he drew back to stab Slade a second time. Slade forgotten, he turned his attention to her. Rising, he stalked closer.

"What do you think to do with that weapon, bitch goddess?" he snarled. His glowing red eyes seemed to bore into her. "You weren't able to defeat me before. Do you actually think you can defeat me with that toy?"

"I will not let you kill my mate." Her voice shook with fear.

"Oh, but I will. He took what is rightfully mine. I'll kill him as I killed the others."

When the demon moved even closer, Bast aimed the gun toward her perfume jar.

The demon stopped dead in his tracks.

"I may not be able to defeat you, but I'm pretty sure this weapon will be more than enough to destroy the jar."

The demon snarled as his eyes shined a brighter red. "You wouldn't dare." His upper lip pulled back as he growled threateningly. "You destroy the jar, you'll be trapped in the mortal realm forever!"

Bast's heart soared. That was all she had needed to hear.

Without another thought, she squeezed the trigger. This time her aim stayed true. The jar exploded into pieces as the bullet hit dead center.

She turned her attention back to the demon as he roared with rage—and in an instant, he disappeared back to the underworld.

Shaking, Bast flipped the safety on the gun and let it drop to the floor. A small cry slipped past her lips as she rushed to Slade's side. Blood trickled through his hands where he had them pressed to his stomach. His skin looked too pale as he gritted his teeth against the pain he had to be feeling. Bast went down on her knees and lifted his upper body in her arms. Slade hissed through his teeth.

Bast brushed a lock of hair out of his eyes. "Slade, look at me. You have to forget the pain and focus."

Slade turned his head so he could look into her eyes. "You're still here. You destroyed the jar and you're still here."

"Yes. When the jar shattered it sent the demon back to the underworld and trapped me here in the mortal realm."

"You can't return to the immortal realm?"

"No. We can talk about that after." Bast didn't like the amount of blood Slade was losing. She knew she had to hurry before he bled to death. "I can save you if you let me turn you into an immortal, but you have to give your consent." Slade's eyes started to shut. She gave him a shake. "Stay with me! Will you let me give you the gift of immortality?"

"If that means I'll have an eternity with you, then yes."

Bast gave Slade a trembling smile. "I'm afraid you'll never be rid of me now."

Placing her hand on the side of Slade's jaw, she gathered her powers and sent them into him.

Slade gasped as she shot power and energy through every cell of his body. "The pain is going away..."

Bast pulled his hand away from his wound and lifted his tunic. The stab wound stopped bleeding and sealed itself as if it had never been. She looked at Slade to find him staring up at her in awe. He wrapped his hand around the back of her neck and brought her lips down to his. He kissed her until they both were breathless.

When he pulled away, he shifted to his knees. "And for your information, I have no problem being stuck with you for the centuries we'll have together. You're my mate and I'll love you for an eternity."

Bast gave him a teary-eyed smile. "Good, because I'll love you for just as long, my mate. How do you feel?"

"Like I can run a marathon and not get winded. I feel stronger too. I think I can get used to being immortal."

She laughed. "Good, because there is no reversing it."

Slade opened his arms. "Since I seem to have more energy than I had before, how about we see how many times I can make you scream with pleasure before I need to recharge?"

As she threw herself into Slade's arms, the scent of her perfume swirled around them. Now no longer bound to the jar, Bast intended to show her mate how much she loved him every day.

Because it was the love he had for her that had finally set her free.

*The End*

## About the Author

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

After trying her hand at writing historicals, she now writes paranormals.

Marisa lives in Ontario, Canada, with her husband and four children. She would love to hear from you, so drop her an email.

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