

Changeling Press

# Bedtime Stories



# KISS OF FIRE

BJ McCall

**Bedtime Stories: Kiss of Fire**  
**B.J. McCall**

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## **Bedtime Stories: Kiss of Fire**

### **B.J. McCall**

**Bedtime Stories editor Claire Casson is on the run. Her job as the housekeeper at Dragon Haven is a convenient cover, but the sudden death of her employer and the arrival of his son, Jonas Thornkill, threaten to expose her secrets.**

**Why his father chose to offer sanctuary to an employee, a shifter with a false identity, perplexes Jonas as much as his intense, primal attraction to Claire. According to dragon law, he's stuck with her.**

**The last thing Claire wants or needs in her life is the complication of an alpha dragon capable of setting her blood on fire.**

**For Jonas, it's a matter of honor, and lust.**

## Chapter One

Heat flooded Claire's chest, neck and face. She popped a chocolate in her mouth and continued to read the submission for Bedtime Stories. Her job as editor for the e-book publisher required daily reading of erotic tales and this hot story really had Claire squirming in her chair.

She picked up a magazine and fanned her face. The heroine hovered on the edge of climax... then the phone rang. Claire started. Yanked out of the sensual moment, she glared at the disruptive instrument. The Thornkill house phone never rang at this hour. Since she was dressed in her pajamas, Claire answered the call with the vid screen off. "Thornkill residence."

"Miss Casson, this is Jonas Thornkill."

His voice brought forth a flood of emotions, namely her intense unexpected sensual reaction to the ruggedly handsome son of her recently deceased employer.

"Good evening, Mr. Thornkill."

"I'll be arriving within the hour."

The elder Thornkill had given her a safe place to hide when she desperately needed it, and she'd moved into the servant's quarters, an apartment above the garage of the huge hillside home, ten months ago. Hollis Thornkill had refused to accept money for his kindness so Claire had repaid him by taking over the housekeeping duties. A real estate mogul, Hollis had worked long hours and traveled extensively. His unexpected but tragic death had brought his son home to Dragon Haven.

"Is there a problem, Miss Casson?"

Although she'd called the elder Thornkill by his first name, his son had never given her the liberty. "No, sir. Is there anything you require?"

"I realize the hour is late, but I'd appreciate a few minutes of your time."

Claire's heart sank. Hollis had given her a home, friendship and sanctuary. She'd had no expectations of receiving the same from his son. Perhaps it was time to move on.

"I'm at your service."

"Meet me in the study in half an hour."

He disconnected. Young Mr. Thornkill was all business, making Claire miss the warmth and the laughter she'd shared with Hollis.

She shut down her laptop and stripped off her pajamas. Dressed in a white top and dark pants, Claire left her apartment. She turned on the exterior lights, illuminating an expansive flat lawn used as a landing area and the second-story terrace that ran the length of the house. Performing a quick walk-through of the house, Claire double-checked all was in order and lit the lamps.

Returning to her apartment, she strolled out onto the tiny balcony off of the living room. Above, stars sparkled like bright diamonds in an ink black, moonless sky. While waiting for Thornkill to land, Claire wondered if come morning she'd still be welcomed at Dragon Haven.

\* \* \*

Jonas snapped his wings, spreading them wide. He dropped his feet, slowing his speed, and settled gently onto the lighted manicured lawn. Folding his wings, Jonas shifted, dragon to man. Scales shimmering, his form shrank, wings transformed to arms, talons became toes and his tail vanished.

He flexed his arms and legs, shaking off the mental fatigue of a twelve-hour day with the lawyers and corporate executives of Thornkill Properties. Naked, he took the outside stairs to the balcony of his bedroom. Although Dragon Haven was now his, Jonas wasn't ready to move into the master suite, preferring the mini-suite once occupied by his mother.

After a quick shower, he dressed in casual clothes. The simple drawstring pants and T-shirt were made of cotton, an expensive fabric in a world where land was a prized commodity. Slipping on a pair of sandals, Jonas headed for the study.

He ran his fingertips over the ancient desk used by generations of Thornkills, noting that the wood was polished and dust free.

Claire Casson was an excellent housekeeper, but why had his father chosen to offer sanctuary to an employee, a shifter with a false identity, a woman without a traceable past?

“Mr. Thornkill.”

Jonas looked up and his heart nearly stopped. Heat stabbed him right in the balls, the same damn reaction he’d had the last time he’d laid eyes on her. His reaction was carnal, primal and intense.

She wasn’t the most beautiful dragon shifter in the world, just the only one that made him feel like his heart was going to jump out of his chest.

She wore her auburn hair in a long braid, escaping tendrils framing an arresting face. Her cheeks were slightly flushed and her lips pink, the fuller lower lip far too kissable. Whenever she was in the same room, Jonas swore he felt a sensual heat flow between them.

Nothing in her demeanor, her actions or words demonstrated she harbored similar thoughts, but an innate sensuality surrounded her.

Had his father succumbed to her charms? If not, what had prompted him to change his will?

Jonas tore his gaze from her mouth and looked into her green eyes. Heat snaked through him. He couldn’t look at her without thinking of her naked, her skin silky hot against his. He was drawn to her, the pull so strong he’d stayed away from Dragon Haven until the circumstances forced him to return.

Anger welled up mixing with sexual frustration. The intensity of his desire made him feel out of control. Jonas, recently separated from an elite paranormal military unit, prided himself on handling difficult and dangerous situations.

How was it this female had gotten under his skin?

“Have a seat, Miss Casson,” he said, pointing at the loveseat on the opposite wall.

In an effort to maintain a distance and keep his hands off of her, he'd always addressed her formally, but in his dreams she was sinfully beautiful Claire. His brain fought his primal instincts.

She settled onto the loveseat, forcing Jonas to suppress a groan as she crossed one long leg over the other. The fabric of her temperature-regulating white top and dark stretch pants clung to every curve, telling him she wasn't wearing underwear. Little wonder he found himself thinking about how she'd look without clothing. He knew her breasts would fill his hands, but he ached to caress her pale skin and tease her nipples to taut points.

*Concentrate! Focus!*

"How much did my father promise to leave you?"

"Pardon?"

Jonas hadn't meant to begin the conversation in such an uncivil manner. It wasn't the money she'd inherited that angered him, but the responsibility his father had dropped onto Jonas' shoulders. "My father's will, you knew he'd changed it?"

Instead of a guilty reaction, he saw only confusion in her eyes. "I know nothing of Hollis's will."

"I understand the two of you were close."

"We were friends."

Jonas stepped around the desk and remained standing, letting his size intimidate her. He ran his fingers over the smooth wood of the desk. "You must have done something more than polish the furniture?"

She didn't squirm, touch her hair or react to his insult. Her eyes narrowed and met his.

He took another jab. "What did you do to earn a hundred thousand?"

She shook her head and stood. "I know nothing about this."

Jonas leaned toward her, his face inches from hers. Her perfume curled in his nostrils. Damn. "Why did he change his will for a woman who doesn't exist? You're a fraud. A charlatan."



She gasped, shock registering in her eyes. "I'll be out by sunrise."

She turned on her heel and her decision to walk away without explanation snapped something inside of him.

Jonas grabbed her shoulder, spun her around and into his arms. Cupping the back of her neck, he slammed his mouth down on hers. Her lips were soft and she tasted of chocolate, sweet and sinful. He drew her closer, crushing her breasts against his chest.

The scent of her assailed his nostrils, the feel and shape of her curves overwhelmed his senses, making mush of his brain, but his cock was as hard as stone.

Her mouth opened beneath his, her lips answering the hunger raging through him. For a long mindless moment, she clung to him. The fierce heat, the need of her, swamped him.

His blood pounded in his ears and his cock strained painfully. He didn't care who she was or wasn't, he wanted her, wanted to fuck her until his cock refused to cooperate.

A cry came from deep in her throat. She pulled back her head, breaking the kiss, and pushed at his chest.

He released her so suddenly she staggered backward. She looked as shocked as he felt. Blood thundering through every artery, he fisted his hands and stepped back.

She fled the room. This time Jonas let her go.

## Chapter Two

Claire raced through the house and ran up the stairs to her apartment. She slammed the door shut and leaned against it. What had just happened? Her insides were sizzling and her senses reeling. Nothing in her interactions with Jonas Thornkill had foretold that he'd discovered her false identity or prepared her for that blazing kiss.

She fisted her hands. Why had she kissed him back?

His questions kept pounding in her brain. She had to leave, pack her meager belongings and find another place to disappear. Thankfully, her editing job with Bedtime allowed her to work from a remote location.

The house phone rang. Claire ignored it. The phone rang again and again. She knew it was Thornkill and right now she had no desire to speak with him.

Finally, on the tenth or eleventh ring, she relented. If she assured Thornkill she was leaving, perhaps he'd stop asking questions she didn't want to answer.

"Open com. Vid off." The speaker light went on. After what had happened in the study, she didn't feel the need to be polite. "What?"

"I'm sorry. I was out of line."

She crossed the room and yanked open the closet. "It doesn't matter."

"Please come downstairs. We still have business to discuss."

She loved Dragon Haven, she felt safe and secure here, but it was obvious Thornkill didn't want her in his house and he wouldn't be satisfied until he unearthed her past. She removed a backpack from the closet and tossed it onto her bed. "You don't have to fire me, Mr. Thornkill. I'll be off your property by sunrise."

"My father changed his will. I can't fire you."

*But you want to.* "I know nothing about that."

"Please, come downstairs. What I have to tell you is very important."

She chose two pairs of pants and several tops and stuffed them inside the backpack. "Not to me."

"There's no reason for you to leave. You have permanent sanctuary."

Claire gasped. No wonder Thornkill was questioning her. By dragon law she had the right to remain at Dragon Haven and there wasn't a damn thing Thornkill could do about it. Except make her life miserable.

"Talk to me. Please."

It made sense to talk to him and buy herself a little time to decide whether to stay at Dragon Haven or find shelter elsewhere. Or was she just hoping he'd kiss her again?

What was it about Jonas Thornkill that made her want to rip off her clothes and jump him? For starters, he was handsome and built like a god. Claire shook her head. She had to forget that kiss and she wasn't about to go back to the study. "I'll meet you in the kitchen."

"Okay."

Claire took several slow, calming breaths before leaving her apartment. When she entered the kitchen, Thornkill had opened a bottle of red wine and was pouring two glasses. Claire glanced at the label and gasped. He'd chosen one of Hollis's prized cabernets.

He handed her a glass. "An olive branch. Please, Claire."

She accepted the glass. His use of her first name made her wary. "This isn't necessary, Mr. Thornkill."

"Jonas. Let's sit at the table."

He waited for her to take a seat before sitting down. He sipped the cabernet. "It's an excellent vintage. I think you'll like it."

What did Thornkill want? "Say what you have to say and let's be done with it."

He looked her in the eye. "My father gifted the apartment to you. It's yours. You can't sell it, but you can't be forced out."

"I don't want it and I have no intention of staying."

"He also left you the hundred thousand."

"You can keep the money."

"It's already been transferred into a secure-access account for Claire Casson. But that's not your name, is it?"

"I never wanted Hollis's money."

"He also passed on an *officium* to me for you."

In dragon law, an *officium* was a moral obligation for a designated time period. Hollis, *what have you done?* "That's not necessary."

"I don't know why he did it, but I'm stuck with you. So you will remain at Dragon Haven."

No wonder he was upset. An *officium* made him responsible for her very life. He had no idea what was at stake. "I can't stay."

"This goes beyond dragon law. It's a matter of honor."

Hollis had understood and accepted the danger, but he'd passed on the responsibility without enlightening his son. Not good. It made sense to leave. The last thing Claire wanted or needed in her life was the complication of an alpha dragon capable of setting her blood on fire. "You can't force me to stay."

"My father made provisions for you and put the onus on me. I resigned from the military and gave up a career I loved to handle the obligations passed down from my father. You're one of those obligations so you damn well can live here for another year."

Claire rubbed her temples. "Why would Hollis do this?"

"I was hoping you could tell me why."

Claire wanted to think things through before she enlightened Thornkill. "You think I coerced him?"

"When I read the terms of his will I was surprised by his bequest and shocked by the grant of permanent sanctuary. When I broke the seal of the *officium*, my life changed."

Claire stood. "Think what you will, Mr. Thornkill, I never wanted any of this."

He set down his wineglass and rose. "It's done and we're in this together. We got off to a rough start. Should we try again?"

Figuring it was best to maintain a civil relationship, Claire agreed.

"I'm sorry I lost my temper," he said. He reached out and brushed the back of his fingers against her cheek. Sensual heat followed in their wake. Her pulse leaped and her heart skipped a beat. Heat coiled in her middle. The man had a profound influence on her libido.

When she moistened her lips, his amber eyes blazed. "But I'm not sorry I kissed you." He brushed her lower lip with the pad of his thumb. His fingertips trailed along the column of her neck. "Your pulse is drumming."

Taking her hand, he pressed it to his neck. "Mine's racing, too. Can you feel it?"

His skin was hot and his pulse pounded as wildly as hers.

He cradled her face, drawing her closer. "I want to kiss you now."

Heat spiraled through her. From her balcony she'd watched him transform from a magnificent dragon into a striking man. His rugged good looks and muscular body were far sexier than any hero her authors might conjure in their stories. "I don't think that's a good idea."

"Why not?"

*Because I'll never want you to stop!*

She started to step away, but he pulled her back. His gaze held hers for several potent heartbeats. His nostrils flared and his amber eyes were fiery with desire.

"It's a very good idea."

The husky timbre of his voice held her fast. When Jonas tilted his head and leaned down, a shiver slid down her spine.

His lips settled on hers, a gentle, unhurried kiss that melted her insides and forced reason from her brain. He slipped his tongue between her lips, deepening the kiss, testing her response. Her senses came alive beneath the firmness of his lips and the heat of his mouth.

His scent surrounded her. The delicious primal scent of alpha dragon spoke to long ignored needs. Trembling with desire, Claire moved closer and pressed her breasts to the hard wall of his chest. Her nipples tightened, fire streaming from the taut points

straight to her pussy. She was so hot she half expected smoke to seep through her skin. If she were in dragon form the kitchen smoke alarms would be shrieking.

He lifted his head and the taste of him lingered on her lips.

"I feel like I'm on fire."

He kissed her again, a demanding kiss that nearly buckled her knees. "Claire?"

The moment of decision had arrived. She wanted to deny the desire raging inside of her. Surely, she was responding to the very thing she knew might be her undoing. Alpha dragons were hard to resist and Jonas had intrigued her from the first day she'd met him. "You make me crazy. I want you. I want you now."

Claire realized he'd still want answers and having sex with him wouldn't resolve the issues between them, but she didn't care. She wanted him. Wanted to feel his arms around her, his hands on her body and his lips on her flesh. The need to touch, to caress, to feel the warmth and strength of his body, struck a chord deep inside her. She hadn't been touched in so long.

Claire touched his chest. Heat seeped through his shirt and his heart thundered beneath her palm.

His chest heaved. "Say yes."

Claire fisted his shirt and tugged. Heat flashed in his eyes. If she succumbed to his sexy charms, leaving would be so difficult and staying far too easy. "Yes."

He yanked off the shirt and threw it across the room.

She'd seen him naked twice, but at a distance. He'd transformed and walked from the landing area to the second-story terrace of his bedroom. His shoulders were broad and his arms bulged with muscle. Up close, he didn't disappoint.

Grasping her by the waist, he lifted her to him and carried her to the kitchen counter, seating her on the hard stone. He pulled off her top and swore softly. Then he lowered his head and settled his mouth over her breast. He suckled deep and strong, sending waves of heat from her aching nipple to her throbbing pussy. A sweet moan of pure pleasure tore from deep within her.

She kissed his hair and twined her fingers through the silky black strands.

Jonas released her breast and hooked his thumbs in the waistband of her slacks, working the fabric down her hips.

Claire leaned back on the counter and lifted her butt. Her pants slid to her knees. He yanked off her shoes then turned his attention to removing her slacks. Once she was naked, he kicked off his sandals and stripped off his pants.

At the sight of his long cock pointed to the ceiling, Claire's breath caught. Glad she'd chosen to stay, Claire licked her lower lip.

Grabbing her by the hips, he pulled her forward and balanced her ass on the edge of the counter. Claire threw an arm around his neck, wrapped her legs around his lean hips and reached for him. The heat of him seared her hand.

"Dragon's teeth! That feels good."

She stroked his cock, guiding him to her.

He thrust, groaning as they joined. Claire dug her fingers into his shoulder.

"You're so wet. Dragon hot."

He plunged deep, so deep Claire feared she couldn't take it. But she did, she could, and she wanted more. Heat poured from his skin, making the air sizzle. Her skin simmered, glowing a soft green.

He stilled. His gaze raked her torso. "Claire, you're glowing."

She'd never glowed green during sex before, but now wasn't the time to analyze it. Claire grabbed a fistful of his hair and tugged. "So I am, now fuck me."

His eyes glittering, his hips began to move, pumping fast and true. She clamped down on him, squeezing his cock. Then he drove into her, again and again, harder and deeper, giving Claire exactly what she needed, the release of days, weeks and months of pent-up desire. Each deep thrust made her wetter, drenching her pussy and transporting her closer and closer to the delicious edge. The pressure built, swelling in her womb. Then Claire touched ecstasy.

Jonas jerked and his hips stilled. Trembling, he drew her close, holding her tight as sparks danced on their skin. When the green sparks disappeared, his fierce grip eased. "What the hell just happened?"

Claire had no idea. "I was glowing a nice shade of green."

"Ever happen before?"

Claire lifted her head from his shoulder. "Never. How about you?"

He shook his head. "What do you think it means?"

Claire traced a fingertip along his jaw. "That the sex was extraordinary?"

A grin curved his lips. "It was, wasn't it?"

"Yeah."

"Want to do it again?"

She did. Her body hummed with joy and need. She'd had a quick sip and now she wanted a long, slow drink. Claire wanted to spend hours touching him, kissing him, making love with him.

He kissed her, a slow languorous exploration with lips and tongue. Claire stroked his hair and ran her hands over his broad shoulders and chest in tactile pleasure.

He lifted his head. "Is Claire your real name?"

She wasn't ready for twenty questions, not now when her insides were sizzling. Tomorrow, she'd tell him everything, but tonight she needed the heat of his kiss and the comfort and security of his arms around her.

He cupped her face in his hands. His fingers were calloused, but his touch was tender. "I know Casson is an assumed name. When I make love to you, I want it real."

She'd trusted Hollis. By gifting her with permanent sanctuary at Dragon Haven, Hollis had placed her in Jonas' hands. Honor and duty bound them together, but the moment he'd touched her, kissed her, made love to her, Claire's world had tilted.

"We're a team. We're dragons, born from ancient souls. If I'm responsible for you, we're going to have to trust one another. Trust begins here," he said, pointing to his chest. "In the heart."

"My name is Claire."

He brushed his lips to hers. "Claire. It's a start."



She prayed he wouldn't ask more questions. Not yet. Right now, she wanted to wallow in the glow of good sex.

A salacious grin curved his beautiful mouth. "Let's take the wine, go upstairs and see if I can make you glow again."

\* \* \*

Seeing Claire in his bed was a dream come true, a very erotic dream. A pale goddess, she lay naked and glorious in the center of his bed. He'd unbraided her hair and now it was spread like dark fire against the crisp white sheets.

He kissed her toe, her knee, her belly, her rosy nipples and the tip of her nose. "You're so beautiful."

She glanced at his groin. "And you're so hard."

He cupped her breast, raking his thumb over the taut point. "I'm already aching to be inside you, but I want to make it last."

"We have all night."

"And tomorrow and the day after. Tonight is just the beginning."

Jonas saw the uncertainty in her eyes. He'd had misgivings, but that had changed the moment he entered her. He'd felt an immediate bonding, at first sight. His reaction to her was unprecedented, but he'd been too caught up in his grief to analyze it.

She had secrets, but his father had protected her. That legacy had been passed to him. Fate had given Claire to him and he'd protect her. Perhaps all his training had been a preparation for whatever was to come.

"Close your eyes, Claire, and let me make love to you."

Her eyes drifted closed and Jonas turned his attention to her lush breasts. He filled his hands with her softness and his mouth with a plump nipple.

He suckled gently, drawing slowly on her flesh until she whimpered.

"Please, Jonas."

He switched breasts, tugging on the turgid point until she fisted his hair.

"I'm gonna die."

Jonas released her breast. "You want me to stop?"

Her grip on his hair eased. "I want you inside me."

Ignoring the heavy ache in his balls, Jonas kissed his way down her belly and spread her thighs with his shoulders. He furrowed his fingers through her thatch of auburn curls, then explored her lush flesh.

Dipping a finger inside, he fucked her gently. Hot and wet, she clamped down on his finger. His blood thrummed and his cock strained. He removed his finger and licked her slit, drenching his tongue with her nectar. He coaxed her clit from its hood and suckled. Her hips came off the mattress and her nails dug into his shoulder.

He welcomed the telling pain.

"Jonas."

Easing two fingers inside her, he teased her flesh until she squirmed and demanded his cock.

While he suckled her clit, Jonas pounded her hot, quivering pussy with his fingers.

Claire cried out and arched her hips. Green sparks danced on her breasts and belly. A tremor shook her body, then she drenched his fingers. Jonas released her clit and withdrew his fingers. The taste of her climax lingered on his tongue. "You sparkle right before you come."

She opened her eyes. "I do?"

He climbed between her open thighs. "It's good with you, Claire. Better than good."

"Shall we try for fireworks?"

His first thrust had him on the edge. Ready to explode, he stilled his hips, but the muscles in his arms and belly shook as he held back his climax. "You do things to me, Claire."

She cupped his ass and squeezed. "Don't stop. Don't ever stop."

Bucking beneath him, Claire set the tempo and Jonas wanted to please her, to make sparks dance on her skin and give her an orgasm she'd never forget.

With each thrust and stroke, the connection they shared flowed and strengthened. A few hours ago he'd been coiled tight and ready to shake the truth from her. Now, he didn't care who she was or what she was hiding.

Their breathing became ragged and the very air around them was glowing. Again and again, she surged up to meet his faster thrusts, milking him, taking him closer to climax. He held back, refusing to come.

Her skin shimmered and green sparks surrounded them. Her features blurred and for a few intense seconds Jonas saw scales instead of skin. In that moment he knew she was his mate.

A cry tore from her throat as she clamped down on him, tighter, engulfing him in a hot flush.

Coming in lusty bursts, Jonas threw back his head and smoke poured from his nostrils.

## Chapter Three

*Brimstone!*

The stink slammed into her brain, jolting her upright, fully awake and shaking in fear.

*They're here! He'd found her!*

"Claire?"

Her breath froze in her lungs and her heart pounded. She cocked her head, listened for the distinctive sound of wing beats. He wasn't here, not yet.

She swung her legs over the edge of the bed. Jonas grabbed her arm and yanked her back. He thrust his face in hers. "What's wrong? You're trembling."

How had Garath found her? She had to fly before he saw Jonas. Gareth would kill him for helping her. He wasn't killing the man she loved. Loved? Now wasn't the time to wallow in mush. She had to fly. "I've got to go."

"You're as pale as a ghost."

His nose twitched and his eyes widened. "Demons."

He released her, jumped out of bed and yanked open the double doors of his closet. He snatched a pair of pants off of a hanger and pulled them on.

Claire scrambled out of the bed.

"Stop." He shoved his feet into black boots. "Don't leave this room."

"My clothes are downstairs."

He grabbed her arm. "You smell that stink? That's demon stink. You don't move from this room."

"We have to get away from here, we need to fly."

"I don't run. I stand and fight."

He strode across the room and faced two wall plaques depicting matching profiles of dragon's heads. He slapped his opened hands against the plaques. A long dark line from ceiling to floor appeared between the plaques. Sections of walls separated and slid to each side revealing an array of ordnance from modern guns, weapons vests and several lethal swords. She'd been in this room dozens of times, but never suspected a hidden arsenal.

"They'll kill you."

Jonas put on a vest and selected a sword, belting it around his waist. Modern weapons were useless against demons. "They'll try."

He pointed to an empty section of the weapons vault. "Get in here."

Claire shook her head. She wasn't letting Jonas fight her battles. "I'm claustrophobic."

"You won't die. It has an air source." He lifted his head and sniffed.

Claire inhaled. The stink had grown stronger. "Are they in the house?" she asked.

He strode toward her. "Not yet. If the doors or windows were breached, we would hear the alarms."

He kissed her, a hard, firm press to the lips. "Get in the vault."

He was determined to face them. She had to tell him why they were here. "They don't want you. It's me they're after."

"You've been hiding from demons."

Claire nodded. "He's coming for me."

His left eyebrow shot up. "He? Talk. Fast."

"Garath. He's a rogue dragon. He wants me."

His eyes blazing, Jonas drew his sword. "He can't have you."

"This isn't your fight."

"The hell it isn't. I love you, Claire."

Claire's heart performed a somersault. "You love me?"

"We'll talk about it later. Get in the vault." He pointed at a lever inside the vault.  
"Pull this down. You'll be safe."

Sword in hand, he raced out of the room.

Instead of getting in the vault, Claire selected the smallest, lightest sword in the vault and ran downstairs. She snatched up her discarded pants and top from the kitchen floor and dressed. Ready to kill demons, Claire went in search of Jonas.

\* \* \*

Jonas counted five demons, slithering black forms armed with red swords. Instead of moving forward to engage them, Jonas remained in the recessed front courtyard. Surrounded by three walls, they had to go through him to get to the front door.

He had to dispatch the demons now. He'd fight his way through hell to save Claire. He'd waited all his life for the perfect mate and now that he'd found her, failure wasn't an option.

Swords in hand, two demons approached. Jonas met their charge, slashing in a crisscross motion. Blades clanged and clashed. One dropped and vanished in a puff of smoke. He swiveled and sliced the second demon in half.

The odds were getting better.

The front door opened and the demons screamed, their piercing high-pitched wails announcing Claire's arrival.

She ran up beside Jonas and pointed one of his long-bladed fighting knives at the closest demon.

"I didn't need any help," he said, keeping an eye on the remaining three demons.

"We're a team, remember?"

"Do you know how to use that knife?"

Claire extended the knife before her. "I thought it was a sword."

Now he'd have to fight demons and dodge Claire's inexperience. "Guard the front. Put your back against the door. If I fail, the demons are all yours."

Two slithered along the walls, one to each side, trying to flank him. Letting loose with earsplitting screams, two of the demons attacked. Jonas stood his ground, the metal of his blade clashing against the demons' lethal swords. From the corner of his eye, he saw the third demon dart past him.

Hacking and slashing, Jonas brought one demon down. Claspings the hilt with both hands, he swung his sword at waist level and spun around, killing the second demon.

His heart stopped. The remaining demon had reached Claire and the tip of his sword was pointed at Claire's throat. Before battle Jonas had felt fear, but until now he'd never experienced sheer terror.

"The master is coming," the demon said.

The distinct *whoosh* of wings came from above and a dark shadow fell upon the courtyard.

Claire's eyes widened, flickering with fear. The demon looked skyward and Jonas struck. His sword sliced the demon in half.

The air churned and swirled. Claire spat. "Garath, the dishonorable."

Jonas spun around to meet his adversary.

The dragon was huge, his hide a dark green and his eyes yellow. Lethal battle blades were fastened to his legs and his tail was tipped with barbs.

"My lovely Claire," Garath said. "Come to me."

"Stay where you are," Jonas said.

"Your warrior is brave. I hope he's willing to die."

Jonas stood his ground.

"Claire is my betrothed."

"Claire is mine," Jonas said, balancing his weight on the balls of his feet. A blast of Garath's breath would fry him.

"Warrior. Meet me in dragon battle, you and I."

"Don't do it, Jonas. Garath is without honor."

"Warrior. Fight me, dragon to dragon."

“Garath challenged my brother and struck a fatal blow with his tail while Claze was shifting.”

Jonas glanced at the barbs on Garath’s tail. Between the dragon’s breath of fire and his lethal tail, Garath had the advantage.

Smoke poured from Garath’s nostrils. “Come to me, Claire, or I’ll incinerate your warrior where he stands.”

Garath reared his head and Jonas knew he had seconds before the dragon blasted him with fire.

Claire threw the knife. The razor sharp blade sailed past Jonas, missing his head by inches and striking Garath in the chest. The dragon roared and flames spewed from his mouth, giving Jonas mere seconds to jump out of the path of fire.

The dragon swiveled his head, ready to fire. Jonas lunged forward and plunged his blade deep, striking Garath in the heart.

The dragon fell forward, his weight slamming onto the flagstone courtyard.

Claire rushed to Jonas’ side. His arm was streaked with Garath’s blood. “Is he dead?”

Jonas nodded and wrapped his arm around Claire’s shoulders, holding her close. “He is. Let’s go inside. I’ll need to make arrangements to have his body removed.”



## Chapter Four

Claire rolled over, sensing the change in her surroundings. This wasn't her bed or her room.

"How are you feeling?"

She blinked and opened her eyes. Jonas stood at the foot of his king-sized bed. His hair was damp and his face freshly shaved. He wore a towel wrapped around his lean hips.

"What time is it?"

"Almost sundown. You've been asleep for most of the day."

The events of the morning washed over her. He'd put her to bed before dealing with Garath's remains. "Is it gone?"

He brushed a lock of hair off her forehead. "It's over, Claire. He's gone and you're safe."

Claire lifted the sheet, inviting him to join her. He dropped the towel and slid in beside her. He drew her close and Claire snuggled against his chest. She loved the solid feel of him, the comfort of his arms holding her tight, making her feel safe. She hadn't felt truly safe in a long time.

"We're a good team, Claire."

"I put your life in danger. I should have told you last night. I was so scared he'd kill you. Forgive me?"

"If you'd tried to tell me, I wouldn't have let you. I was too caught up in making you glow." He nuzzled her cheek. A sizzling thrill ran along her spine.

"I want to tell you now, before we become distracted."

His eyes were hot with desire. "Is that what you call it?"

"My name is Claire Ansara."

Jonas' eyes widened. "I know that name. Our grandfathers fought in the urban wars together."

"They made a battlefield pact to look out after each other's family if one of them should fall. That's why I sought sanctuary at Dragon Haven."

"Tell me about Garath."

"He was never my betrothed. When I refused to accept him as my mate, he persisted. He tried to take me by force, but my twin brother, Claze, confronted him. Garath challenged my brother and killed him. I told Garath that I would accept him after I properly buried my brother. He was convinced I was too frightened to defy him and left me unguarded. As soon as it was dark, I took to the skies. He's been tracking me for months."

"I can understand his obsession."

"It wasn't me he wanted, it was my inheritance, the money and property gifted to me and my brother. Garath knew if Claze died unmated I'd inherit his portion. Garath knew where my family and friends lived and worked. Twice, I came close to being captured by demons. I had to go to a place Garath didn't know about, so I came to Dragon Haven.

"I don't know how Garath tracked me here. I rarely left the property and as a precaution I haven't taken to the skies since my arrival."

"I must be responsible. My father didn't tell me about you and my inquiries to discover your identity may have tipped Garath to your whereabouts. I'm sorry I mistrusted you."

"I'm glad it's done. Seeing him again was so terrifying, I wanted to fly as far and fast as I could."

"You didn't run, Claire. You stood and fought like a warrior."

"I'm an editor not a warrior."

"Not a housekeeper?"

"I'm an editor for an e-book publisher, Bedtime Stories. I edit erotic books. I prefer love and sex to blood and guts."

He cupped her face in his hands. "So do I. I love you, Claire."

They kissed, a long lush kiss that set Claire's heart on fire. He wrapped his arms around her and kissed her, thoroughly, sealing their love. He deepened the kiss, sliding his tongue between her lips. Her blood sang and her skin heated.

Claire knew an alpha dragon was exactly what she wanted. She'd found her dragon mate. "I love you, Jonas."

"You feel so good." He kissed her cheek, her neck, working his way to her breasts. When he captured her nipple between his lips, a heated breath caught in her lungs. Smoke streamed from her nostrils.

Cupping her buttocks, he rolled her on top of him. Hot and ready, she straddled his hips and guided his hard cock to the moist entrance of her pussy. One thrust and the hard heat of him penetrated her.

She gasped, arching her back and taking him deeper.

"Ride me, Claire. I want to see you climax and watch the fireworks."

She slammed her pussy onto his thick cock, pounding his flesh. The thrust of his hips came hard and fast. Her blood burned and flames licked her pussy. For the first time in her life, Claire experienced the *heartfire* of true dragon love.

Claire grasped Jonas' hands, pulling them from her hips. Fingers entwined with his, Claire gripped his hands tight. Green sparks spread from their hands, covering their arms and chests.

When the sparks reached their bellies, the heat intensified, coiling deep in her middle, tighter and tighter. Crying out, Claire climaxed in a brilliant flash of green.

Jonas' cry of pleasure joined hers.

"Claire, did you see the flash?"

Her heart still pounded and her pussy trembled. "I saw it."

"Will it happen if we're in dragon form?"

Claire smiled. "Let's spread our wings and find out."

They scrambled out of bed and ran out onto the balcony. Jonas took her hand and kissed it. "Go. I'll follow."

The balcony walls were thick and wide enough for a dragon to stand on. Claire climbed onto the wall and shifted. Skin turned to shimmering scales. Her body thickened, growing in size and girth. Her arms transformed into gossamer wings.

She launched, flapping her wings and catching air. Whipping her long tail, she soared into the sky.

Jonas joined her. They flew in circles around Dragon Haven, playing chase and touching tails. When the sky turned inky black, they landed on Dragon Haven's soft lawn.

Jonas rubbed his neck against hers. The slide of his scales along her neck sent shivers all the way to the tip of her tail.

"I love you, Claire. Be my mate."

He touched his nose to hers, then their lips met. Wings fluttered, tails entwined and scales shimmered. Flames flew from their mouths, sealing their love with a kiss of fire.

## **B.J. McCall**

A multi-published author of contemporary and futuristic sensual romance, B.J. McCall is a West Virginia native now residing in Northern California. Thanks to an older sister who was a librarian, reading became B.J.'s favorite pastime. B.J.'s idea of the perfect way to spend a rainy afternoon or a day at the beach is reading a romance novel. The phrase "Do what you love" applies to B.J. -- she loves to write and each story is special. She hopes her readers will enjoy each and every one of them. Visit her website at [www.BJMcCall.com](http://www.BJMcCall.com).