

ELLORA'S CAVE TWILIGHT



*Goddess  
Revealed*  
**Love's *Fiery* Arrow**

**MARISA CHENERY**

## Love's Fiery Arrow

Marisa Chenery

*Goddess Revealed, Book Two.*

Aric thinks he's losing his mind when a lioness appears in an alleyway to defend him from some thugs—when she turns into a gorgeous woman, he's even more confused. Before he can even ask her name, though, she disappears.

That night, the gorgeous woman shows up at his apartment and tells him that he's her mate—the man meant to stay with her for all eternity. The passion blazes between them, but they have to make a choice—for them to be together, Aric has to accept immortality and Menhit must agree to leave her home in the immortal realm, never to return.

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Love's Fiery Arrow

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# *LOVE'S FIERY ARROW*

**Marisa Chenery**

## **Chapter One**

Aric Driscoll groaned as he took in the rush hour traffic on Toronto's busy Yonge Street. As a bike courier, the heavy traffic didn't help him do his job any faster. Adjusting the strap of his messenger bag across his chest, Aric slowed his bike. He'd just picked up a delivery, the last one of the day, and wanted to get it over and done with. The package he had to deliver wasn't heavy, but it was long and narrow. The end of the box stuck out the top of his bag and lay against his back.

Thinking there was nothing for it, he changed direction. He would have to cut through the back alleyways if he wanted to make up some time. While he raced down some smaller side streets, a car pulled up behind his bike and started to follow him.

At first, he thought the car only happened to be going the same way, but as the car's front bumper edged closer and closer to his bike's back tire, he started to think otherwise. Picking up speed, Aric decided to try to lose them in the back alleys. He zig-zagged through them, taking short turns, but the car continued following him.

He soon cursed under his breath when he realized he'd taken a wrong turn. Paying more attention to the car than where he should be going had cost him—he had stupidly trapped himself in a dead-end alley. The car quickly pulled in behind him, blocking his way out. Aric turned his bike around and pushed at the brim of the black bicycle helmet he wore as two tough-looking characters stepped out. They slowly walked toward him. Aric let his gaze skip over them. The first guy had dark brown hair, which he wore in a buzz cut. He also looked as if he were built like a brick shithouse with fists the size of hams. His partner appeared equally big and wore his reddish brown hair down to his shoulders. Neither of them looked friendly.

Buzz cut spoke first. "It doesn't look as if you're going anywhere. Why don't you get off your bike so we can get this over?"

"If it's all the same to you, I'd rather stay right where I am." Aric could fight with the best of them, but he knew he didn't stand a chance against these two. He was muscular, but not bulky muscular. He spent too many hours a day on a bicycle to have massive muscles.

Long hair shook his head. "We didn't corner you just to let you go."

Aric had no idea why these two had singled him out. What made him so special? "If it's money you want, I only have five bucks. As for what I have in my bag, I doubt it would be worth much to you."

"Who says we want your money or the package you have in your bag?" Buzz cut asked, cracking his knuckles.

Had he somehow managed to piss these two off? Aric didn't think he had cut them off with his bike. He knew some taxi cab drivers took exception to cyclists weaving in and out of traffic, but he hadn't done much of that today. The only thing Aric could come up with was maybe these two got their jollies from beating the crap out of bike messengers. Either way it didn't look good.

As the two guys stepped closer, the package resting against Aric's back started to heat up, warming enough for him to feel the heat seeping through the cardboard of the box and into his black t-shirt, straight through to his skin. It grew so hot Aric wondered if he would get singed.

A loud roar of a large cat suddenly filled the alley causing the two thugs and Aric to freeze in place. *What the hell was that?* Aric thought while searching the alley. At first he couldn't see anything, then his heart jumped into his throat as a large lioness stepped from the shadows at the back of the alley. The look of real fear that suddenly appeared on the two thugs' faces would have been comical if he weren't in the same danger of being attacked as they were.

The lioness slinked closer while she curled her upper lip and growled with menace at the two men. She stopped when she drew up alongside with Aric and let loose

another ear-splitting roar before her body started to blur and shift. Unable to look away, Aric's mouth hung open as the lioness disappeared to be replaced by a woman.

He swallowed audibly as he gazed at her in shock. She had straight black hair that hung past her shoulders. Only able to see her profile, Aric definitely liked what he saw. She had delicate features, a complete contrast to her body, which was slim and muscular. She wore what looked like a kilted skirt that only reached her mid-thigh. Her top, sleeveless and tight, showed a great deal of her midriff. Aric had to wonder if her skin felt as soft as it looked. He then gave himself a mental shake. Was he crazy? Right about now, he should be questioning his sanity not admiring the woman's good looks. He also should be hightailing it out of there, but obviously his flight or fight instinct had completely deserted him.

The woman reached behind her, drawing Aric's eyes to the quiver of arrows she carried on her back. A bow appeared in her other hand as she selected an arrow and placed it in the bow. The arrowhead burst into flame when she aimed it at the two thugs, who looked as if they were ready to piss their pants.

Aric focused his attention on the two men who had both jerked into motion at the same time. They dashed to their car and drove away as if the hounds of hell were on their heels. Now alone with the woman, he swung his head back in her direction. When he didn't find her, Aric quickly searched the alley. She didn't appear to be anywhere. Out of the corner of his eye he spotted something, drawing his attention.

In the spot where he had last seen the woman, a single arrow lay on the ground. He pushed his bike over to it and picked it up. *Where could she have gone?* The alley had a dead-end and it wasn't as if he could have missed seeing her leave. She had simply disappeared. Aric touched the arrow's head with the tip of his finger and quickly jerked it away. The metal still felt hot. Thinking he had to be seeing things, he swung his bag to his front and shoved the arrow inside. Once he had the bag against his back, he hopped onto his bike and continued on his way. He still had his delivery to make. Later he could come to grips with the fact that he had lost his marbles.

\* \* \* \* \*

Aric reached the corporate high-rise ten minutes later. He locked his mountain bike to a lamppost before he went inside. After he rode the elevator up to the right floor, he pulled the package out of his bag as he approached the reception desk. He smiled at the woman behind it.

"I have a package for a..." Aric stopped and read the name off the package. "For a Mr. Black."

The woman nodded. "Just a sec. I'll let him know. He's been expecting it."

Aric shifted from one foot to the other. He just wanted to get back on his bike and go home. At least Mr. Black didn't keep him waiting—a short, heavysset, middle-aged man soon came out to meet him.

Mr. Black took the package when Aric handed it to him. Before Aric could give him the piece of paper he needed signed to confirm the delivery, the man grabbed a pair of scissors from the reception desk and cut the box open. He reached inside and pulled out a single arrow. Aric shifted nearer and studied the arrow. If he wasn't mistaken, the arrow Mr. Black held in his hands matched the one still inside his bag, right down to the fletching. It seemed too much of a coincidence that the woman had possessed the exact same one back there in the alley.

Mr. Black smiled as he noticed Aric's interest. "I see you're admiring my latest acquisition. Beautiful, isn't it? It's purported to have belonged to the Egyptian goddess Menhit, who was a goddess of war. She went ahead of the Egyptian army, bringing down Egypt's enemies with her fiery arrows. With arrows like this one."

Aric swallowed. *Fiery arrows?* The woman in the alley had aimed a fiery arrow at those thugs. It couldn't be. Even if he did believe in those sorts of things, which he didn't, Aric felt pretty sure a goddess of war would not just suddenly appear in some alley in the middle of downtown Toronto. It seemed too farfetched.

"Interesting." Aric held out the piece of paper Mr. Black needed to sign.



Mr. Black gently put the arrow back inside the box before he took the paper. As he signed, he said, "It is. I've done a lot of research on Menhit, she who massacres."

"Oh." Aric just barely stopped himself from rolling his eyes. Obviously Mr. Black was the type of person who liked to tell people lots of useless information whether they wanted to hear it or not.

Finally, Mr. Black had signed the paper. Before he gave it back, he said one last thing. "I particularly like that Menhit was a lioness-goddess, as most goddesses of war were depicted."

Aric took the paper and shoved it into his bag. As Mr. Black opened his mouth to speak once again, Aric cut him off before he got a chance to say anything else. "That's all very interesting, but I have another delivery to make."

"Oh, yes, of course. I won't hold you up. Thanks for delivering my package unharmed."

With a nod of his head, Aric crossed to the elevators and pushed the down button. The information Mr. Black had given him about Menhit swirled inside his head as he rode the elevator down to the lobby. He really must have lost it, because at the moment, he couldn't say for sure it hadn't been Menhit in that alley. Too many facts seemed to match—the fiery arrow, and the fact that the woman had first appeared as a lioness. Aric gave himself a mental shake when he stepped outside and unlocked his bike. He'd go home and have a couple of stiff drinks. Maybe then he would be able to come up with another plausible explanation as to what had happened in the alley.

When Aric arrived at his apartment building, he hefted his bicycle onto his shoulder and took the elevator to his third-floor, one-bedroom apartment. Leaving his bike against the wall by the entrance, he turned and locked the door. He ran his hands through his hair once he took off his bike helmet. After a long day of deliveries Aric was hungry, so he grabbed a yogurt before he took a much needed shower. It had been a scorcher of a day.

He headed for his bedroom as he pulled off his bag. Aric set it down on the floor by his bed and took out the arrow. Still not ready to think about how he had come by it, Aric put it down on the bed. He quickly stripped out of his clothes and headed for the bathroom.

Feeling human again after his shower, Aric dressed in a dark blue tank top and a pair of khaki shorts. He made his way to his small living room and went to the window air-conditioning unit. Cool air blew against him, making him sigh in relief. If not for it, his apartment would be unbearably hot. Satisfied that he wouldn't sweat to death any time soon, he went to his kitchen, which was even smaller than the living room.

Too tired to cook, Aric grabbed a frozen pasta dinner out of the freezer and threw it into the microwave. Once he could handle his dinner without burning himself, he picked it up, grabbed a fork and headed back to the living room. He sat on the couch, propped his legs on the coffee table and switched on the TV.

The combination of food and being outside in the hot sun all day made Aric tired. It was way too early to go to bed, so he pushed back his tiredness and forced himself to focus on the TV. Deciding he needed a beer to round out his meal, he went to the kitchen and grabbed one from the fridge. Aric sat back down on the couch and took a few sips from the cold beer bottle, but all too soon, his eyes started to droop.

Feeling as if he was he could fall asleep at any time, his eyes snapped open when he felt something warm and furry brush up against his shins. When his gaze landed on the lioness that stood between him and the coffee table, Aric jumped. The beer he held dumped in his lap. Cursing as the cold liquid seeped through his shorts to his dick, Aric lurched to his feet and ran to the kitchen for a dish towel.

As he patted down his shorts he purposely kept his back to the living room. *I'll turn around and the lioness will be gone. She was just a figment of my imagination.* He threw the beer-soaked towel into the sink and took a deep breath. Aric spun around and once again locked gazes with the lioness that had come up behind him. She looked pretty damn real to him.

\* \* \* \* \*

Menhit slowly walked on silent paws as she kept her eyes on the mortal's back. She hadn't meant to startle him. When he had started to fall asleep, she'd thought it would be the perfect time to appear before him again. Given his reaction, she now thought she may have made a slight mistake coming in her lioness form.

She sniffed the air around her. Through the strong scent of beer, Menhit easily smelled the mortal's scent. His scent made her feel things she hadn't felt before. It stirred her body, aroused her, and awakened a part of her that had lain long dead. One look at him and she found herself intrigued. Being an immortal, days tended to flow one into another. That he sparked more than a casual interest from her spoke volumes. She also felt a thrill go through her at the prospect of change, of getting to know this man better. She'd had the same reaction back in the alley. To Menhit, her reaction to him screamed mate, which meant this mortal was the one meant for her, her match, her mate.

Watching him closely, she stood her ground when he turned around, their gazes meeting before she looked him up and down. He wore his brown hair on the shaggy side with the ends of it just reaching the tops of his shoulders. His green eyes stared back at her. Menhit already knew he stood taller than she since he had to be over six feet tall. She let her gaze skim over his body. A loud purr rumbled out of her throat as she took in his muscular build. Menhit couldn't wait to run her hands all over him.

The mortal backed away until he hit the counter behind him. "You can't be real. Seriously. I had to have made you up. I spent too much time out in the hot sun today and I have sunstroke. Yeah, that's it. I have sunstroke and I'm out of my head with fever." He placed the palm of his hand on his forehead. He frowned. "I don't feel that hot."

Menhit closed the distance between them. To show she was indeed real, she stood up on her hind legs and placed her front paws on his shoulders. She ran her raspy

tongue along his cheek before she shifted to her human form. Staying where she stood, she said, "You do not have sunstroke. I'm as real as you are."

His breath left his lungs in a whoosh. "If it isn't sunstroke then I must have lost my mind."

She smiled. "No, you haven't lost your mind."

"You *can't* be real. Shit like this just doesn't happen."

Taking hold of his hand, Menhit placed it over her left breast. His hand automatically molded itself to it. "Do I feel real?"

"Uh, yes." As if he couldn't help himself, he squeezed her breast through her top.

Menhit smiled to herself. "See, I am."

"How...how..."

His voice trailed off as Menhit wrapped her arms around his neck and took the step needed to bring her body up against his. "What is your name?"

"I'm—I'm Aric."

Aric's breath rasped in and out of his lungs. Menhit felt his cock lengthen and thicken against her stomach. She resisted the urge to rub herself up against him. Right now Aric looked ready to bolt. "I am Menhit."

"Menhit?"

"Yes. Menhit."

"Holy shit."

Aric took her arms from around his neck and stepped out of her embrace before he walked away. Menhit followed him into another room that held a bed and a couple other pieces of furniture where she watched him head over to the bed and pick up an object. When he turned around he held one of her arrows, the one she had left behind in the alley. Through his possession of her arrow, she had been able to find Aric, and as long as he kept it with him, she would be able to find him wherever he happened to be in the mortal realm.

He cleared his throat. "You're Menhit? As in, this is your arrow, which is supposed to belong to the Egyptian goddess of war, Menhit?"

She nodded. "Yes. That is my arrow and I left it for you."

Aric's legs seemed to give out when he sat down on the edge of the bed. "I must be asleep. This is all a dream. I just need to wake up, and when I do, you'll be gone." He looked a trifle pale, and he shifted away as if she would bite him when she took a step closer."

Menhit caught up his hand. She brought it to her lips and kissed each of his knuckles even though he stiffened at her touch. "I thought we went through this already. I'm really here." She released his hand and reached for the ties that held her top together. Slowly she undid it.

"What...what are you doing?"

"I'm taking off my clothes." Aric's heated gaze followed her movements as she slowly loosened the tie. "I want to make love to you. I want you." She looked down at his crotch where his erection strained against the front of his shorts. "And I can see you want me."

He groaned while he watched her pull her top over her head and drop it to the floor. "Let's just say if I did believe you, which I honestly don't know if I do, I'm mortal. If you truly are an Egyptian goddess, that must mean you're immortal. Isn't there some kind of law or something that says we can't be together?"

Menhit smiled and reached for the top of her kilt. "No, there isn't." She took hold of her kilt and pulled it off. She now stood naked before Aric. Her arrow dropped out of his hand and onto the floor when she moved to stand between his legs. Menhit knelt down and placed her hands on his thighs. She looked up. His chest rapidly rose and fell while he gazed at her body. "I'm yours if you want me, Aric."

He sucked in a deep breath. "I'm dreaming. I have to be. I'm going to close my eyes and when I open them you'll be gone." Aric closed his eyes, then opened them. "Nope, you're still here."

"I'm not a dream." Menhit ran a caressing hand up and down Aric's thigh. "I know you must find it hard to accept that I am truly a goddess, but how else would you explain my presence here?"

"I could be losing my mind, or the hot sun finally fried my brain."

Menhit laughed sultrily. "I assure you, you are perfectly sane. Don't you want me? Is that why you refuse to believe I'm truly am what I say I am?"

Aric shook his head. "Oh, I want you. Even if you are a figment of my imagination, I want you. I've just never had a goddess proposition me before."

"Then I will be your first."

She inched her hands higher, and taking hold of the bottom of Aric's sleeveless short tunic, she lifted it. With her bottom lip between her teeth, she slowly bared his stomach and chest. When she couldn't reach any higher, he grabbed the tunic and yanked it over his head. Menhit let her gaze roam over his chest and down his stomach. Her mate was muscular, but not overly so. There didn't seem to be an inch of fat on him anywhere. The thought that she had finally found her mate made Menhit shake. She'd waited for so many years for this day. She wouldn't have to be alone anymore. She shifted closer on her knees and pressed her lips to his stomach as she skimmed her hands along his chest. His stomach muscles quivered with each light brush of her lips.

With a moan, Aric caught her by the arms and pulled her off her knees. "You're starting to feel pretty damn real to me right about now."

He shifted closer to the edge of the bed. He took hold of her waist and pressed his lips against her skin just below her breasts. Menhit held onto his shoulders as Aric kissed and licked a path across her ribs. Her pussy clenched when he kissed higher, licking the underside of one of her breasts. He did the same to the other before he returned his attention back to the first.

Menhit felt her knees grow weak as Aric's tongue snaked out and circled her nipple. If she weren't already holding onto his shoulders, she would have found herself on her knees once again. His hands moved to cup her bottom when he opened his

mouth and sucked the taut peak of her nipple inside, sucking on it. Menhit felt the pull all the way to her womb. Her pussy ached to be filled and wetness pooled between her legs.

Leaning her weight against him, she pushed Aric back onto the bed. He released her nipple and inched back until he lay in the center of the bed. He then reached for her, pulling her down onto his chest. His hand fisted in her hair as he brought her mouth down to his. Aric's mouth slanted against her lips while he pushed his tongue inside and twined with hers. The feel of his hard cock pressing against her belly made her moan. He felt thick and large through his short leg coverings.

Kissing her, Aric rolled her onto her back. His hand cupped her breast and pinched her nipple while he sucked on her tongue. Menhit opened her legs wider to allow his hips to settle between them. She arched her hips upward and rubbed her pussy against his hard cock. Spasms of pleasure rippled through her, pushing her arousal higher.

Aric's hand trailed down her side to her hip. He released her lips and made a wet path from her mouth to her ear. As he swirled his tongue inside, his hand drifted lower. He shifted so he laid half on and half off her, his fingers dipping between her legs. Menhit purred when his fingers spread the moist folds of her pussy and caressed her clit. His thumb circled it before he pushed one and then another finger inside her core.

It felt good to have Aric's fingers moving in and out of her, but Menhit wanted more. She wanted his cock where his fingers now were. Pushing at the top of the garment he wore on the lower half of his body, she tried to get it down past his hips. Aric pumped his fingers into her twice more, then undid the piece of clothing. With a few hard jerks, he had them pushed down his legs and off.

Menhit looked down Aric's body. His fully erect cock jutted from his body thick and large, just as he had felt through his clothes. The tip of her tongue came out and moistened her lips. She couldn't wait to have it deep inside her. Reaching down, she took him in her hand. His cock jerked as she pumped it up and down his full length.

She wanted to taste him, to take him in her mouth and bring him to the brink of his release, but that would have to wait. She wanted him too much.

Aric pulled her hand off his cock. "No more. You're driving me crazy. I need to be inside you."

She dragged her tongue along his jaw. "Then don't wait any longer. I'm more than ready to have you take me."

Rolling back on top her, Aric settled between her legs. The tip of his cock probed her wet entrance while he took her lips in a hard kiss. With a moan, Menhit spread her legs wider as he slowly pumped his hips, pushing more of his cock inside with each thrust. Once he'd sheathed himself to the hilt, she purred with pleasure. He filled her completely. Squeezing down on his thick shaft with her inner muscles as he rode her, Menhit clutched at Aric's back, waves of pleasure shooting through her. Her hips lifted off the bed, meeting each of his thrusts.

Aric buried his head in the crook of her neck and moaned, his pace growing faster, harder. Having him move deep inside her, a wave of possessiveness surged through her. He was now hers. The pleasure coursing through her was made more intense by the fact that her mate had claimed her. Menhit felt her climax build as Aric's hard thrusts pushed her ever closer to release. When he cupped her bottom in his hands, lifting her so she could take him deeper, Menhit's orgasm overtook her. With a keening moan, her strong inner walls clutched his cock in a tight fist. Aric's moans soon joined hers as he rammed into her one final time, stiffening above her, his cock pulsed while he emptied himself inside her core.

Breathless, Aric collapsed on top her. Menhit wrapped her arms around his back and held him close. He soon rolled to his side, taking her with him. With one leg thrown over Aric's hip, she relaxed against him. Content to just lie next to him, Menhit let her eyes drift shut.



## **Chapter Two**

Not really ready to wake up, Aric stretched. He knew it had to be late given the darkness of his room. The feel of a warm body pressed up against his soon brought him fully awake, though. Unable to see much, he looked at the woman beside him. Her long, dark hair lay across his pillows. He reached over and turned on the bedside lamp.

Menhit's eyes were closed, but her brown eyes soon blinked open. She smiled. "You did not sleep very long," she said huskily.

He didn't think he would ever get tired of hearing her speak in her accented voice. "I guess I woke up to make sure you hadn't disappeared into thin air again," Aric said. "Or to make sure you weren't a spectacular wet dream."

"I plan to stay around for as long as you want me." Menhit lifted the sheets that covered them and settled on top of Aric. "I would have thought making love would have convinced you I'm no dream."

"I'm still having a hard time wrapping my poor mortal mind around all this."

He brought his hands up and stroked her bare back. Menhit was beyond gorgeous, especially with her full lips puffy from his kisses. He felt his cock stir when he traced her straight nose and high cheekbones with his fingertips before he settled back onto her lips. Those lips had been made for kissing. Letting his hands move from her face to her hips, he took her mouth in a languid kiss. When he pulled away, his cock showed more than a little potential.

Aric brushed Menhit's full lower lip with the pad of his thumb. "I'm glad you don't want to leave any time soon. I haven't had my fill of you yet. Plus I need some more convincing that you are real."

Menhit smiled. "Mmm, I can tell." She wiggled against his hardening cock.

He sucked in a breath. "That felt good. Do it again."

She wiggled once more. "Yes, it does feel good."

He tried to stay focused. He knew where this would lead if he didn't try and slow things down. "We really should talk, Menhit."

"About what?" She gently nipped his chin before she shifted lower, placing kisses across his chest.

"About what?" Aric repeated. With her mouth on him, he found it hard to concentrate. He became fully aroused after she bent her head and circled his flat nipple with the tip of her tongue. "Ah, we should talk about...you and me. About how you came to be in my apartment."

Menhit lifted her eyes, and said, "We can talk about those things in the morning."

Aric sucked in another sharp breath when Menhit reached down and lightly brushed her fingers down the length of his shaft. "I, oh god, I have to work tomorrow morning." His hips bucked beneath her when she wrapped her fingers around his erection and slowly pumped up and down.

"Then we can talk when you get home from this work."

At this point, Aric pretty much didn't care whether they found time to talk or not. All he could think about was how soon he could bury his aching cock inside her moist heat. As he ground his erection against her, Menhit shifted positions until she straddled his hips. She rubbed her pussy along his length until she'd coated him with wetness. Aric reached up and cupped her full breasts in his hands. Menhit brought him to full arousal so easily. She made him ache for her more than any woman had.

Rising slightly above him, she positioned the tip of his cock at the entrance of her body and pushed down, causing Aric to groan as she took all of him. The feel of her wrapped around his shaft made him want to pound inside her, but he let her control their loving this time. She rose up until he almost came free of her body only to sheath him to the hilt once again, making Aric pant.

As she continued to ride his shaft, he moved his hands to her hips. He held her, lifting his hips off the bed to match her strokes. Even though he had already come once

that day, he could feel another orgasm build. The feel of her inner walls clutching him tight made him moan with pleasure. Aric looked down to where their bodies were joined. Menhit rode him faster, her hips angled just right to make her moan.

Needing her to come before he did, he rubbed her clit with the tip of his finger. Menhit threw back her head and moaned loudly, increasing her movements. Then she was there. Aric didn't try to hold back his release when her core tightened, fisting his cock. His moans mixed with Menhit's as he came.

Aric pulled Menhit down onto his chest. He tucked her head under his chin and held her tight. Satiated, he closed his eyes knowing he needed to sleep. He had to be at work early in the morning, plus lack of sleep wouldn't do him any favors. Menhit stirred, shifting so she lay cuddled up against his side. Aric kept an arm around her as he turned off the lamp, and then with a contented sigh, he fell asleep.

\* \* \* \* \*

Menhit stood in front of the window inside Aric's bedroom and looked outside at the city. This Toronto appeared to be a very large city, and a busy one. She could still see people moving about on the street below even though dawn was hours away. The mortal realm had changed so much since the last time she had been to it. The mortals' numbers had grown along with their cities. The large size of the population of the city made her feel a bit anxious.

Peering over her shoulder, Menhit looked at Aric. He lay on his back on the bed, quietly snoring. She smiled at the sight of him looking so relaxed. She wanted him again, but she knew he needed his rest. Unlike her, he needed more than a couple hours of sleep a night, especially after the pleasure he had given her.

She turned back and her smile faded. Aric was her mate and making love to him only made the bond stronger. The need to stay with him, to be with him, had become a living, breathing thing inside her. But she didn't think she could tell him what he meant to her, at least not yet. There were some things she had to think through before she told

him. If she chose to accept Aric as her mate, it would greatly affect her. As a mortal, Aric could not live with her in the immortal realm since it wasn't allowed—even if she gifted him with immortality, it still wouldn't be possible because he wouldn't be a god. Menhit didn't know if she was ready to make that kind of commitment at this point. He may be her mate, and she longed to have a life with him, but that didn't mean she could make her decision lightly. She'd never tried to live in the mortal realm for any length of time. She only stayed as long as she needed to defeat Egypt's enemies and then she had returned to her home in the immortal realm.

Moving back to the bed, Menhit slipped under the sheets next to Aric. She propped herself on her elbow and studied his face. Part of her powers as a goddess was that she had no trouble seeing in the dark. Just looking at him took her breath away. She had thought she would never find her mate—she had been alone for centuries. Now that she had found him, she never wanted to let him go. She didn't know what to do. As if Aric sensed her uncertainty, he rolled to his side and threw an arm around her waist, snuggling up against her. Menhit settled down beside him, wrapped her arm around his shoulders and kissed the top of his head.

Tomorrow would be another day. Maybe then the decision she had to make would be easier once she and Aric had their talk.

Jolted awake by his clock radio, Aric reached over and slammed his fist on the button to shut it off. He yawned and rubbed the sleep from his eyes. When the sheets rustled next to him, he turned to look at Menhit. The first thing that crossed his mind when his gaze landed on her was how sexy she looked lying beside him with her tousled hair. The next thing was a sense of relief that she hadn't left.

He grinned. "Good morning, sexy. You beat me awake, I see."

Menhit smiled back. "Good morning to you. I've been awake for hours."

"Did I keep you awake? I tend to hog the bed and I snore a bit, or so I've been told," he said with a crooked grin.

"No, it wasn't anything you did," she said with a small laugh. "I don't need to sleep as long as mortals. Only a couple of hours will refresh me."

"Oh. So you just laid there beside me for the rest of the night?"

"Yes."

"You could have gotten up. You must have been bored out of your skull."

She shook her head. "I didn't mind. I liked watching you sleep."

Aric studied her. Menhit seemed a little withdrawn. Yes, she smiled, and he hoped the night they spent together had put it there, but it just didn't seem to reach all the way to her brown eyes. "Is everything okay, Menhit?"

She leaned in and gave him a light kiss. "Of course, everything is fine."

"You look a little down. A little sad."

"Maybe it's because I'll miss you while you work."

Aric grinned, pleased to hear her say that. "I wish I could take you, but I have to spend the next eight hours on a bicycle while I deliver packages."

Menhit waved his words away. "I understand, Aric. Do you want to have that talk you mentioned last night?"

"I wish we could." Aric sat up and looked over at his clock radio before he flipped the sheet back. "I have to get some breakfast into me, pack food for the day and then leave for work." He got out of bed and stretched. The feel of Menhit's hand when she caressed his bare ass made him turn back toward the bed. "None of that, now. I really can't be late for work. My boss will have a shit fit if I am. What would you like to eat? I can make you something quick before I leave."

Totally at ease with her nakedness, Menhit slipped out of bed to stand beside him. Aric had to force himself not to caress her body with his eyes, while he resisted the urge to throw her on the bed and take her until she screamed his name with pleasure. After making love to her more than once, Aric had to finally admit she was no figment of his imagination. He also had to admit his feelings for her were stronger than he would

have thought possible. Each time they had made love it had felt as if they connected on some deeper level.

Menhit shook her head. "I don't need to eat. My body doesn't require food or water."

"You don't eat? Like ever?"

"Never."

"Okay, I guess that will save me some time then. I'm going to the bathroom and wash up. You can meet me in the kitchen, if you want. I shouldn't be long."

He quickly headed for the bathroom, not waiting for her response. Menhit made too tempting a sight with her standing there in all her naked glory. Returning to the bedroom and not finding Menhit in it, Aric quickly dressed.

Inside the kitchen, he found Menhit seated at the table lost in thought. He cleared his throat loudly as he moved to the counter where the blender sat to make a smoothie. "So what are you going to do while I'm at work?"

Menhit seemed to come back to herself. "I will stay here and wait for you. I'd like to learn more about the mortal realm, though. Much has changed since I last came."

Aric started the blender. Not able to talk over the sound of it without having to yell, he held up his finger for Menhit to give him a minute. He shut off the blender and, smoothie in hand, moved to Menhit's side and extended his hand to her. "I know just the thing to help you learn about the mortal realm. And it will keep you from getting too bored."

He pulled Menhit to her feet and led her to the living room. He picked up the remote control for the TV and showed it to her. "This operates the silver box over there," he said. With a finger, he pointed to the TV where it sat against the wall. "The box is called a television, or TV for short." Aric turned it on.

Menhit moved closer to it. "It plays moving pictures," she said in awe.

He chuckled. "Yes, and it gets even better." He switched through a couple channels. "With over a hundred channels, you should find lots of things to watch. Now come over here so I can show you how to work the remote."

Menhit soon mastered the remote control. By the time Aric was ready to leave, Menhit had become totally enthralled with the television. Assured she would be okay by herself, Aric gave Menhit a final kiss. After he grabbed his mountain bike he headed off to work.

\* \* \* \* \*

Aric arrived at the Downtown Bike Messengers' office at exactly eight o'clock. He wheeled his bike into the wide doors at the side of the building and headed to the dispatch counter for his first delivery. Other bike messengers stood together talking while some checked over their bikes.

His boss, Wayne, waved Aric over to the dispatch counter when he saw him. "Hey, Aric. Ready for another busy day?"

"As always."

"Good. Make sure you keep your fluids up. It's going to be another hot and humid day. I can't have one of my messengers out of commission from the heat."

"God forbid. You'd lose out on some money—however would you survive?" Aric said dramatically with a smile on his face.

Wayne gave him a halfhearted glare. "Ha ha, very funny." He looked down at Aric's bike. "You'd better put some air in that front tire. It looks a little soft."

Aric looked at it then cursed. He must have a slow leak. He'd just filled it the other day. "Damn. I better see about getting the inner tube replaced."

"Here, let me fill your tire for you, Aric," said Phil, another messenger. He took Aric's bike. "I have to fill mine, too—I don't mind doing yours at the same time."

"Thanks, Phil."

Aric watched Phil walk his bike over to the air pump that hung on the back wall. He and Phil got along well enough, but a slight tension had cropped up between them this past spring. It mostly had to do with the fact that Aric had beaten Phil, the longstanding champion, at the spring Alleycat race. Turning back to Wayne, Aric lifted his brow in question and nodded his head in Phil's direction. Wayne shrugged. Everyone knew Phil had been more than a little pissed off when he had lost. This was the first show of goodwill Phil had shown him since his win. It also made Aric wonder if it had anything to do with the fact that the next Alleycat race would be taking place the following week. Maybe Phil hoped to regain his title this time around, which wouldn't happen if Aric could pull off another win. The illegal race, from checkpoint to checkpoint in rush hour traffic, would land the winner a nice monetary prize. Aric intended to hold onto his title as long as he could.

Wayne cleared his throat. "Here's your first delivery." He handed Aric a large padded envelope. Before Aric could walk away, he added, "Make sure you fix that tire of yours soon."

"Will do." Aric put the envelope in his bag then crossed the room to get his bike.

Phil, who had been crouched down next to it, stood. "You're all set," he said.

"Thanks. I owe you one," said Aric.

"Don't worry about it. Are you ready for the upcoming race?"

Aric nodded. "Yeah, I think so. Let's hope it isn't as humid as it is now."

"That would suck. Well, I'd better let you go."

"Sure," Aric said. "Catch you later."

Adjusting his bike helmet, Aric pushed his bike outside. He swung his leg over the seat, then headed to the address where he had to make his first delivery. While he rode down the streets, he couldn't help but wonder why Phil had all of a sudden decided to be nice. Aric had tried to alleviate some of the tension between them for the last couple of months, but Phil had always brushed him off. Why would he go out of his way to be friendly now? Aric knew if he won next week's Alleycat race that would soon change.



He decided to let it go for now as he focused on the street ahead of him. Now was not the time to sustain an injury. He needed to be at a hundred percent if he hoped to be the winner of the race next week.

During one of his breaks, Aric chugged a bottle of water and ate a protein bar. He also thought he'd call Menhit to make sure she hadn't become too bored. Remembering he hadn't explained what a telephone was to Menhit, he paused for a second as he pulled out his cell phone. Luckily he didn't get too many calls on any given day, and he had an answering machine to take any missed calls.

Aric decided to call Menhit anyway. Once the answering machine came on he could tell her what to do. The machine came on after the sixth ring. After the beep, he said, "Menhit, it's me, Aric. Just follow the sound of my voice to the kitchen. Pick up the black thing that is hanging on the wall next to the fridge. Hold it to your ear with the pointy thing, the little antenna, at the top and the buttons facing you." He heard the phone pick up and then some muffled sounds on the other end. "Can you hear me, Menhit?"

"Aric?" Menhit asked timidly.

"I'm here."

"You are? How did you get inside this black thing?"

Aric chuckled. "I'm not inside it, babe. It's called a telephone. It's how mortals talk with one another when we aren't in the same place at the same time."

"Oh, I saw something like this on the television, but I didn't understand how it worked."

"I should have explained it to you before I left this morning. Are you still okay?"

"Other than that I miss you, yes, I'm okay."

"I miss you too. I only have a couple more hours left, then I'll be home."

"I'll be here waiting."

The mental image of Menhit meeting him at his apartment door with open arms—better yet, naked with open arms—caused his cock to become partially aroused. He quickly pushed that thought away before he got a full-fledged hard-on. Riding a bicycle with an erection wasn't exactly comfortable. "I promise I'll make it up to you when I get home."

Menhit purred loudly. "And I know exactly what you can do as well."

"Oh, yeah? And what would you like me to do?" Aric asked in a husky voice.

"You can give me that part of you that gave me so much pleasure last night. And once won't be enough. I'll want it at least twice. On the bed, on the floor and maybe in the room that has the running waterfall."

Aric swallowed. "That would be the shower." He found he had no problem imaging what Menhit would look like as she stood in the shower with the water running down her naked body. Even better, her in the bathtub filled with bubbles, parts of her playing peek-a-boo, tempting him to join her to see the rest of her body. He would have to stop by a store and pick up some bubble bath on the way home.

Menhit purred again. "We could wash each other's bodies. Then I could go on my knees and —"

He quickly cut her off before she finished that sentence. "Enough, Menhit. You're killing me, here." Now fully erect, he had to adjust himself inside his pants. Damn. The first time the woman uses a phone and she already had him worked up. "I have to go before I embarrass myself on a public street by coming in my pants. To hang up the phone, just put it back on the cradle on the wall. Okay?"

She sighed. "All right. I'll do that now."

Aric didn't get a chance to say bye to Menhit before her end went dead. He smiled and shook his head. He would have to work on her phone etiquette. After he put his cell phone away, he looked up the location of his next pickup. Setting off to the address, Aric hoped the rest of the day would fly by. He now couldn't stop thinking about Menhit and all the things he would do to her once he got home.

\* \* \* \* \*

An hour later, Aric had a near brush with death. Finished with one delivery and on his way to pick up his next, he raced down the traffic congested street. Actually making good time for a change, he wove in and out of the traffic to get around parked cars. That was when disaster struck.

One minute he raced down the street and the next he found himself flying over the handlebars of his bike when his rear tire locked up. The car behind him slammed on its brakes, narrowly missing him. A bit dazed, Aric sat on the street and shook his head. If not for his bike helmet, he would have been a goner. After his body slammed into the asphalt his head had hit the road next. He quickly took stock of himself. Along with the impressive road rash on his left arm, there was a large hole in his pants at his right knee. Blood seeped into the material around it from a large cut.

The guy who had been driving behind him got out of his car and moved to stand in front of him. Traffic drove around them. "Are you okay? It looked as if you hit pretty hard when you landed."

"I'll live," Aric said while he painfully pushed himself to his feet. He went over to his bike and picked it up. One end of his chain hung loosely from the crank. The other end looked to be tangled in the derailleur and freewheel on the back tire. He tried to push the bike to the sidewalk, but the back tire was still locked up solid.

The driver followed him as he lifted the bike and hefted it off the street. "Can I give you a ride somewhere? You're bleeding pretty badly." He pointed to Aric's knee. "And your arm and face don't look any better."

Aric's fingers came away bloody when he touched his fingers to the left side of face. Crap, he really had done a number on himself. Noticing the crowd gathering on the sidewalk to gawk, Aric nodded. "Sure, if you don't mind, I could use a lift back to Downtown Bike Messengers."

"No problem. We can put your bike in the trunk."

Once they had his bike inside the trunk, Aric was about to slip into the passenger seat when he remembered about his bloodstained clothes. Noticing his hesitation, the man pulled an old-looking blanket from the backseat and put it on the passenger sit for Aric to sit on. He then told the guy the address to Downtown Bike Messengers before he pulled off his bike helmet. Now that the shock had started to wear off, Aric felt the sting of his scrapes and cuts. To distract himself, he mulled over what had happened. Why had his chain broken like that? He couldn't come up with an answer. It wasn't as if his chain had been old and rusty, since he'd only gotten this bike a couple of years ago. It didn't make any sense. He would have to take a really good look at it. Maybe then he would find what had caused the damage. At least he knew of a bicycle shop not far from his apartment. He would have to go buy a new chain on the way home. So much for the romantic evening he had planned to spend with Menhit. Between his wounds, and now having to fix his bike, Aric doubted he would be good for anything.

## **Chapter Three**

The two hours before Aric was expected home seemed to pass too slowly for Menhit. She'd long grown bored of television. She had learned quite a bit about this more modern mortal realm, but she could only take so much of sitting in front of the television. Menhit could have gone back to the immortal realm while Aric worked, but she preferred to stay at his home. If she made the choice to stay with him permanently, she needed to feel comfortable being alone. If she couldn't handle staying here, how would she ever stand being in the outside world? It would take a lot of adjustment on her part, but Menhit knew she would do it for Aric if she chose to stay as his mate.

With Aric gone Menhit had done a lot of thinking. She had connected with him, just as she known would happen. The connection, the bond, would only grow stronger the more time they spent with one another. Even now, she felt as if he was slowly becoming a part of her. If Menhit wanted to be honest with herself, she didn't know if she would be strong enough to let Aric go. For too long she had been alone. Finding her mate was something she had long yearned for, to have that one person that would make her feel complete. She also needed to be with him again, to join her body to his and strengthen their bond.

In anticipation of Aric's return Menhit decided to set the mood for the night. With a wave of her hand, she willed a number of thick candles throughout the living room. Another wave and a large clay bowl and a cloth appeared on the small table near the couch. Inside the bowl, a lotus bloom floated in the water. Menhit knew Aric would be hot from his day spent outside and intended to wash him with the lotus-scented water. Once she removed the sweat from his body, she would then do what she had spent the day thinking about.

The minutes ticked by and Menhit started to worry something had happened. What if the men who had accosted him in that alley had found him again? Even though they had run when she had aimed her fiery arrow at them, Menhit knew they hadn't just decided to single Aric out on a whim. Reading mortals' minds wasn't exactly her strong suit, but she had been able to read enough to know those men had purposely cornered Aric. And that they had meant to do more than try to steal from him. They had planned to do bodily harm to her mate at another's bidding.

The sound of a key being put in the apartment's door brought Menhit back to the present. With a wave of her hand all the candles in the living room burst into flame when she moved closer to the door to wait. The smile she had for him soon fell away as Aric pushed open the door. The sight of the traces of dried blood on his face, arm and the clothes he wore had her rushing over to him.

"Aric! What happened?" she asked worriedly.

He grimaced and leaned his bike against the wall. "I had a little accident when the chain broke while I was riding my bike."

Menhit then noticed the linked metal that hung from the lower part of his bike. "Why did it break?"

Aric shook his head. "I don't know." He slowly made his way to the living room. When he saw the lighted candles, he turned back. "I know I said I would make it up to you tonight for leaving you alone, but I don't think I'm in any condition to do it justice. I also have to fix my bike before tomorrow. Sorry."

Menhit helped Aric pull the bag off his back. "You have nothing to be sorry for." She put her arm around his waist and led him to the long, cushioned piece of furniture. "Sit. Let me see what I can do to make you feel better."

As Aric fell onto it, he groaned. "I really should go take a shower and wash the scrapes out. I probably have gravel stuck in them."

When Aric shifted and tried to get up again, Menhit put a hand on his chest and gently pushed him back down. "Let me look after you. I'm a goddess, remember? I can heal a mortal's wounds."

Aric leaned back against the cushions. "Then by all means, do your thing."

Picking up the cloth from the table, she dipped it in the water. "This may sting a bit, but I have to clean out the wounds before I heal them."

Aric gave her a half-smile. "As long as you kiss it better afterward, I don't mind."

Menhit moved to sit beside him, a smile tugging at her lips. "I can do that," she said.

Gently, she pressed the wet cloth to his cheek. He sucked in a breath as she thoroughly cleaned out the wound. Once she finished, Menhit pressed the palm of her hand against his cheek. Her hand warmed as she used her powers to heal the scrape. She removed it and then placed her lips against Aric's now-healed cheek. The only evidence that he had been wounded was the bruise, which she couldn't heal. She then trailed her lips across it to his ear.

Aric shivered when she tugged at his earlobe with her teeth. "I don't think I hurt my ear."

"I'm just making sure."

She dipped the cloth back into the water and wrung it out before she moved to his arm. Same with his cheek, she healed the scrape leaving a bruise in its place. Before she kissed it better, she said in a breathy voice, "Take off your tunic, Aric."

While he did as she'd asked, Menhit willed another bowl of water and cloth next to the first. She dipped the fresh cloth in the second bowl and squeezed out the excess water before she used it to wash the rest of Aric's face. Rinsing the cloth, she washed his neck and the top of his chest. Aric watched her, his gaze locked on her lips, his breathing became heavier.

Menhit ran the cloth down his arms and stomach. She bit back a smile when her gaze landed on the noticeable bulge in Aric's pants. Finished, she put the cloth in the second bowl then moved to kneel on the floor in front of Aric. "I need you to take off your pants to tend to your knee."

Aric undid them, pushed the material over his hips and gingerly down past his knee before kicking them off. Menhit felt her pussy clench at the sight of Aric, now completely naked, his cock standing up straight from his body. She found everything about her mate to be perfect. Menhit didn't think she would ever get her fill of looking at his well-toned body. The sight of him made her want to lick and kiss every inch of it, which she intended to do very soon. She forced herself to focus on his knee. She would take care of it first before she lavished attention on his manhood and the rest of him.

Using the cloth from the first bowl, she gently washed Aric's injured knee. This one appeared to be deeper than the others. She shook her head over the sight of it. Aric had to be feeling this one. After her ministrations, all that remained was a large bruise spread across his kneecap. Menhit threw the cloth back into the first bowl and picked up the second. Still on her knees, she used it to wash his feet, working her way up each of his legs.

Menhit dipped the cloth in the water again and shifted to kneel between Aric's legs. She ran the cloth along one side of his hip and then the other. Aric's hands fisted at his sides as he drew in a raspy breath. His cock jerked when she inched the cloth ever closer.

She rinsed the cloth one more time and gently dragged it down the length of Aric's shaft. His hips bucked as she took a firm grasp of his cock and thoroughly washed every inch of him. Satisfied, she tossed the cloth inside the bowl and gazed up at Aric. The heated look he gave her in return caused her heart to pound. The expression of longing he wore on his face had wetness pooling between her legs.

With their gazes locked, she licked his cock from base to tip. Aric moaned. "You like that?" she asked huskily.



His eyes dilated with arousal. "God, yes."

Tearing her gaze away, Menhit circled her tongue around the tip of his shaft before she sucked him inside her mouth. Aric's groans filled her ears while she pleased him, taking as much of him as she could. His hands fisted in her hair, holding her in place while he rocked his hips against her. She sucked on his cock, making sure her tongue swept the sensitive underside of the head, causing it to grow even harder inside her mouth. Menhit felt moisture leak between her legs and down the inside of her thighs, getting as much pleasure from what she was doing as Aric was. She ached to have him buried deep inside her, thrusting in and out.

When Aric released her hair and pulled at her arms, she let go of his shaft and moved to stand. Aroused, needing to feel him deep inside, now, Menhit willed her kilt and top off her body. Naked, she ran her hands along her stomach and up to her chest. She cupped her breasts in her hands and pinched her nipples.

With a groan, Aric grabbed her hips and urged her to straddle his thighs. "If I don't get inside you right this minute I'm going to explode."

Menhit moved her hands to his shoulders as he dragged his teeth along her nipple before he sucked it inside his mouth. She moaned. "Fill me, Aric."

Sucking at her breast, he cupped her bottom with both hands and shifted her into position. Then with one thrust, he sheathed himself to the hilt inside her wet pussy. A moan of pleasure pushed past her lips as she slowly rode up and down his thick shaft. He filled her to capacity. With each stroke, the tip of his cock butted up against the entrance to her womb. That he was her mate made their joining so much more pleasurable. And each joining brought them closer together, binding her to him.

Aric released her nipple and dragged his tongue along the side of her neck. "You feel so good, Menhit. I don't know how long I'm going to last," he said with a groan.

"Soon," she panted. "Soon."

Menhit squeezed her inner walls around his shaft while she rode him faster. Her climax edged nearer as she slid up and down his hard length. Aric's hips bucked

beneath her, matching her strokes. As she took him harder, she felt the first ripples of pleasure deep inside her pussy. With a sound of pleasure pushing past her lips an intense orgasm hit her. Her pussy gripped Aric's cock and she spasmed around him. He slammed up into her, almost lifting her off the couch, then he too started to climax. Menhit ground herself against him, feeling him pulse deep inside her.

Fighting to regain her breath, Menhit placed her sweaty forehead to Aric's and kissed the tip of his nose. "Did I make you feel better?"

Aric wrapped his arms around her and brushed his lips along hers. "Yes, you did. You can play doctor with me any time." He wiggled his eyebrows.

Menhit giggled. "All right."

He then grew serious. "I wish we could stay like this all night, but I really do have to fix my bike. I also want to see if I can figure out why the chain broke. It was perfectly fine—I don't understand it."

She brushed Aric's hair off his forehead. "Do you think someone could have done something to make it break?"

Aric shook his head. "I doubt it. I can't think of anyone I know that would do something like that."

"I don't know, Aric. First the men in the alley and now this."

His brows drew together. "What about the men in the alley? They were just a pair of thugs who thought I may have something worthwhile to steal."

Menhit shook her head. "No, that is not why they cornered you."

"How do you know that?"

"I was able to read their minds a little. They sought you out on purpose to hurt you. I have a feeling they would have beaten you unconsciousness and left you bloody in that alley."

"Why would they have done that? I don't know them. And I think I would have remembered seeing them if they had shown up at work."

"I don't know. I didn't take the time to dig deeper in their minds to find out, but I do know someone put them up to it."

"You don't think my chain broke by accident, do you?"

"No, I don't. Did anyone touch your bike today?"

"The only person who came near my bike without me being around was a guy named Phil who I work with. He's a bike messenger as well. He only put air in my tire, and he never left my sight when he did it. The only other option is when I left my bike locked up outside while I made one of my deliveries. Someone could have quite easily messed with the chain while I was gone."

"Are you sure this Phil is trustworthy?"

Aric nodded. "Absolutely. Things may be a little strained between us, but he would never do anything to my bike. Bike messengers tend to look out for one another. Plus, I've known Phil for years, as long as I've been a bike messenger."

Menhit gave him a hard stare. "How long is long? Twenty years? Thirty years? That isn't very long."

Aric chuckled. "Maybe to you it isn't, but I'm mortal, remember? I'm twenty-eight, Menhit. I became a bike messenger at twenty-two. So I've only known Phil for six years, and to a mortal, that's a long time."

She grew thoughtful. To her, thirty years was nothing and six years, just a flash in time. It also made her think of how quickly Aric would age. She hadn't really thought about it before, but Menhit realized she would have to make her decision to stay as Aric's mate or not very soon. Years could go by before she decided if she wasn't careful.

## **Chapter Four**

Showered and dressed only in a pair of shorts, Aric set the tools he needed to fix his bike on the floor beside it along with the box that held the new chain. He glanced over his shoulder at Menhit where she sat on the couch watching TV. He let his gaze run over her, stopping at her damp hair. She had insisted she shower with him and, of course, they did more than wash while in there. Every time they made love, Aric had a harder time picturing his life without Menhit. He knew he was falling for her too hard and too fast, but he couldn't seem to stop himself. He felt as if she had been meant for him, which was ridiculous since she was an immortal goddess and he was just a mortal. Could they make things work? Aric didn't know, but he wasn't ready to give Menhit up, if he ever would be.

Aric squatted down and set to work removing the broken chain. His stomach growled, reminding him he needed to eat, but he wanted to get the old chain off first. It still bothered him that it had broken. In the back of his mind, he kept thinking about what Menhit had said about the two thugs, and that someone had sent them after him. He had to admit it made him a little uneasy to think they had purposely cornered him to beat him to a bloody pulp because someone asked them to do it.

While he worked, Menhit came up behind him. "Can you fix it?"

"Yeah. I just have to take the old chain off and put on the new one I bought." He pointed to the box beside him.

Menhit opened it. "Where does it go on your bike?"

Aric cursed under his breath as he fought to untangle the broken chain. "It goes around the rear derailleur, then around the freewheel, then around the crank where the pedals are." He pointed to each part of the bike saying its name and used his finger to show exactly where the chain would go. With a final tug, he managed to pull the

broken chain free. His stomach also growled again. He gave Menhit a sheepish look when she lifted a brow in his direction. "Sorry. I'm hungry," he said.

"Then you should eat."

"I will after I get this new chain on."

Aric picked up the old chain and closely examined it. Damned if he could see what had caused it to break. It looked as if it just snapped in half. With disgust, he put it aside and went to reach for the box, but Menhit snatched it away.

"Let me."

"I don't know, Menhit. The chain is greasy, and it takes a bit of work to put it on."

"Who said I would be touching the chain?" A smile spread across Menhit's lips while she focused on the chain. One second it sat in the box and the next it had disappeared.

"What happened to the new chain?" Aric asked.

Menhit nodded at his bike. "Look. Did I do it right?" she asked hesitantly.

Aric looked at it. Sure enough, the new chain was on. He smiled and gave Menhit a nod. "Yes. You did it perfectly. I have to say, it's handy having you around."

She waited until he had gathered his tools before she spoke again. "Aric, how do you feel about me?" Menhit wore a look of uncertainty on her face as she looked at him.

Aric stood and faced her. Not wanting to touch her with his greasy hands, he rested his forearms on the tops of her shoulders. He took a deep breath and worked up the courage to tell her what she meant to him. "I like you a lot, Menhit. You're like no other woman I've ever known. I want to be with you and when I'm not, I can't stop thinking about you. If I had my way, I would want to keep you," he said lightly.

"And how would you feel if I said I wanted to stay with you forever?" Menhit asked softly with some hesitation in her voice.

"Forever as in marriage and all that?" he asked.

"No, not marriage. More like mates," Menhit said quietly.

“Mates? Isn’t that the same thing as marriage?”

Menhit sighed. “Not exactly. It’s more permanent than your marriage. Mates are forever. When a god or goddess finds their mate, they claim them for eternity.”

“Am I your mate, Menhit?” He held himself still waiting for her to answer. She silently nodded. “How can you be so sure? We’ve only known each other a couple of days. I know we’re good together, but that doesn’t mean we won’t get sick of each other later.” The longest Aric had stayed with one of his girlfriends had been just under a year, and he had been the one to end the relationship. A bit of a commitment-phobe, the thought of settling down with one woman for the rest of his life usually made him sweat. But for some reason when he thought of Menhit as that woman it didn’t freak him out.

She cupped his face in her hands. “I knew the instant I smelled you in that alley that you were the one for me. You intrigued me, awoke a part of me that has been dead for so very long. You make me feel whole. After thousands of years of being alone, I have finally found my mate. I know it is different with mortals, and I understand your kind needs time to fall in love.”

“Are you...” When his voice broke with the emotions he felt, Aric had to stop and clear his throat. “Are you trying to tell me you love me, Menhit?”

“Yes, I love you. We were destined to be together—the bond that has formed between us tells me so. And that being the case, I now have a decision to make. If you think you can’t love me as I love you, then I’ll return to the immortal realm and let you live out the rest of your mortal life without me.”

The idea that Menhit would leave him and he would never see her again didn’t sit too well with Aric. It actually made him feel a bit panicky. “And if I do love you as you love me? What then?”

“Then I will truly make you my mate. I’ll give you immortality, which will forge a stronger bond between us. I will have to make my decision before that. If we become

mates I will have to stay here in the mortal realm, because you would not be allowed to live in the immortal one."

Aric turned his head and pressed a kiss to Menhit's palm. She'd just dumped a heavy load on his shoulders. If he found he couldn't love her, he would lose her. And if he did love her, she would be forced to give up the life she knew in the immortal realm because of him. "Can I at least have some time? I know some people believe in love at first sight, but I'm not one of them. I've seen too many marriages fail because the couple rushed into it." Seeing the sad look on Menhit's face, he placed his hands over hers. "I do have strong feelings for you, Menhit, stronger than I've ever felt for a woman. Just give me some time to sort them out for myself first. Plus you have to think about what exactly you would be giving up to be with me. I'm sure Toronto can't compare to the immortal realm. You'd have to hide what you are if you stay here. Can you handle that?"

"I'm not going to lie and tell you that the immortal realm doesn't have its benefits over this one, but what are all the luxuries if I can't share them with you? I'll give you two days. If your answer is no, then I think it best we end things now while it's still early."

Aric groaned. "Can I have three instead? The Alleycat race takes place in three days. It's a bike race all the bike messengers in the city participate in. I won the last one and I'm already feeling the stress of the upcoming race. I don't want to add to it by having to make such a major decision just before it. Please?"

She nodded. "Three days then."

\* \* \* \* \*

Later that night, Aric jolted awake. His heart slammed against his ribs as the last vestiges of a dream, a bad dream really, slowly slipped away. In the darkness, he turned to make sure Menhit still slept at his side. When he saw her in bed next to him, he let out a quiet sigh of relief. He then glanced at the clock radio to find he'd only slept

for an hour. Rolling to his side, he put an arm around Menhit's waist and put his head close to hers. She slept blissfully and murmured in her sleep when he tightened his hold.

Now that he held her close, Aric felt his heart slowly return to normal rhythm. The bad dream had seemed so real. In some ways, maybe it had been. Some people said dreams were where the answers to problems could be found that were too hard to face while awake. Aric had to think they were right. In his dream, he had realized too late that he loved Menhit. He had wanted to tell her that he wanted her to be his mate, but she kept moving farther and farther away the closer he came. He'd shouted her name until his voice had become hoarse, but not once did she turn his way. When she had disappeared, Aric felt as if a piece of him had been torn away, that he would never be whole again. The pain of losing Menhit had been worse than anything he had ever felt. Falling to his knees, he had bellowed her name. At that point, Aric had forced himself to wake up. If this had been his subconscious's way of telling him he already loved Menhit, then he had gotten the message loud and clear.

Needing to prove to himself that Menhit still wanted him, that she wouldn't suddenly disappear as she had in his dream, Aric pressed against her side. He slowly pulled the sheet down her naked body. Menhit muttered something he didn't understand, but she didn't wake up. His cock stirred to life when he gently traced the outside of her waist and her stomach with his hand. Her skin felt as soft as it looked. He didn't think he would ever get enough of touching her, tasting her. Aric moved his hand higher, cupping her breast, making her nipple bead beneath his palm. His cock jerked as Menhit arched her back slightly, sighing breathily.

Aric pressed his lips to her shoulder, then moved down to her other breast. So as not to wake her, he moved lower on the mattress. When he came level with her nipple he swirled his tongue around the taut peak. Menhit drew in a sharp breath when he sucked her pebbled nipple into his mouth. With his weight supported on one elbow, he caressed down her stomach to the top of her sex. He continued lower until his fingers



brushed against her pussy. Menhit moaned. She opened her legs as he stroked her clit, then moved to test the entrance to her body. Finding her already wet, he pushed two fingers into her. As he worked his fingers in and out, Menhit arched her hips and whimpered. His cock now fully erect, Aric resisted the urge to take her right then. He wanted to taste her first, have her come against his mouth before he lost himself in her moist heat.

Menhit came fully awake when he moved to lie between her legs and kissed a path from her breast to her stomach. "Mmm, what a nice way to be awakened." She moaned when he slipped even lower and laved her clit with the flat of his tongue. "Ohhh, don't stop."

Aric lifted his head as he spread the folds of her sex. "I don't intend to stop until you come." He still found it hard to believe how much he wanted this woman. The need to make them one beat at him, making him ache for her. She was becoming a necessity just as the air he breathed.

Returning to her pussy, he circled her clit with his tongue before he lapped at the entrance to her body. Tasting her, breathing in her scent, Aric wanted to drown in her. She was his everything, he could admit that now. Menhit moaned and threaded her fingers through his hair, rocking her hips against his mouth. Aric stiffened his tongue and jabbed it inside her pussy. The taste of her on his tongue made his cock throb. He replaced his tongue with his fingers and pushed them inside her when he lapped at her clit. The sound of her whimpers rose in volume as he pushed her closer to climax.

When Menhit's pussy clamped down around his fingers, Aric sucked on her clit until the last spasm passed. Unable to wait any longer, he rose between her legs. Instead of taking her on her back he rolled her onto her stomach. With both hands on her hips, he positioned the lower half of her body so she knelt on the mattress with her bottom in the air. Aric moved to kneel behind her, took a firm hold of the base of his shaft and led the tip to her wet entrance. He only gave her the head, then pulled completely out of her body, teasing her until she tried to push back to take more.

With a hold on her hips, he held her still while he rocked against her, only allowing her to take what he had given her. Sweat ran down his back as Menhit's moans turned to whimpers. The sound of their heavy breathing filled the room. Still he refused to give her more of his length. When he gave her all of his cock, he wanted her to come again as soon as he entered her fully. He knew he wouldn't last much longer than that. He felt his cock harden even more with each small thrust. On the very brink of his own orgasm, Aric reached around Menhit and stroked her clit at the same time he slid the tip of his cock in and out of her wet core.

Almost at the point of no return, Aric reared back one final time and plunged deep inside. Menhit cried his name, her pussy fisting his cock while her climax tore through her. It was enough to send Aric into his own intense orgasm. Digging his fingers into her hips, he held her tightly to him and moaned, filling her with his cum.

Aric pulled out of Menhit and moved her to her side so he lay spooned against her back. He dragged the bed sheet over them. Lifting the hair away from the back of her neck, he placed a kiss there. If the dream hadn't been enough to tell him how he actually felt about Menhit, this joining would have. He wasn't just sleeping with her because he found her attractive. He had made love to Menhit and he used his body to tell her how much she meant to him instead of words. Aric wanted to tell her right then and there he loved her, that he never wanted to let her go, but he held back. He had three days. When he did tell her on the third day, he intended to do it right. He would make it a day they would both remember.

## Chapter Five

Aric and Menhit spent the next two days getting to know each other better. Since it was a weekend and Aric didn't have to work, they found themselves spending more time in bed making love than they spent out of it. He did take her out into the city a few times, but Menhit usually cut their outings short with a few well-chosen words whispered in his ear.

Menhit's love for Aric grew stronger with each day that went by. She found herself smiling for no reason, happy to be where she was. Aric had yet to tell her he loved her. He would tell her he loved her hair, her body, but he wouldn't tell her he loved *her*. At first, she thought he would never say the three words she wanted to hear. She then realized he may not have said them yet, but that didn't mean he didn't show her his love every time they made love. She did remind him once that the third day would be upon them soon. Aric's reply had been that it wasn't the third day yet and for her to be patient.

The day before the Alleycat race, Aric left her alone in the apartment while he ran some errands. When Menhit asked to go with him, he had refused to take her along. He'd then kissed her senseless and slipped out of the apartment before she had a chance to recover let alone remember her own name.

While Aric was out, Menhit decided to take a shower. It was one modern convenience that she truly appreciated in this new mortal world. Back in the immortal realm in her chambers, she had a large pool that she could change and heat the water with a swipe of her hand. But now that she had come to the conclusion that she was willing to give up the immortal realm for Aric, she knew she would have to learn to fit in. She knew she would be happy living in Aric's apartment—she had learned that was what he called his home—with him at her side. She locked the entrance door, but

decided not to put the chain on as Aric had shown her. She wouldn't be that long and she figured the one lock would be good enough, not that she expected anyone to try to walk in.

After she washed her hair, Menhit picked up the bar of soap and brought it to her nose. The spicy scent of it would always remind her of Aric. She finished washing, then towel dried her hair and body. It was then she heard a noise coming from the front of the apartment. Menhit wrapped the towel around her body and went to investigate.

She found a man standing in the front entrance near Aric's bike. He'd shut the door, but hadn't pushed it shut. When Menhit took a closer look at him, she realized he was one of the men from the alleyway, the one with the very short hair. Not only had he broken into the apartment it was also obvious he was up to no good. When he reached to take hold of Aric's bike, Menhit growled low in her throat.

"What do you think you are doing?" she snarled.

The man swung around toward her. The hard look he wore disappeared when he saw Menhit. His mouth opened and closed like a gasping fish. "You...it's you."

She tried to read his mind to find out why he was here and who had originally sent him along with the other man to hurt Aric, but she ended up getting nothing. The man was so afraid of her that he couldn't keep his thoughts straight. His fear seemed to override everything else he had inside his head.

Deciding she'd had more than enough of this man interfering with Aric's life, Menhit decided to give him a warning he would soon not forget. She moved closer to the man while she spoke. "You will stay away from Aric. You can also tell whoever sent you that should any harm come to my mate I will hunt him down, along with you and your friend, and rip you apart with my claws and teeth."

Just before she reached the man who stood frozen in fear, Menhit shifted to her lioness form. To push her threat home, she roared, showing off her sharp teeth while she pawed the air with her claws extended. The man let out a whimper and, much to

Menhit's disgust, wet himself. He then yanked open the apartment door and raced out as if she was snapping at his heels.

Menhit shifted back to human form and stepped around the puddle of urine on the floor to shut the door behind him. She shook her head, and with a wave of her hand, the mess disappeared. She didn't think she would have to worry about the man or his friend coming near Aric again. She just wished she could have found out who was behind all this. Aric may not think someone was after him, but he couldn't deny it now.

\* \* \* \* \*

When Aric returned a short time later, Aric found Menhit standing outside on the balcony looking at the city below. He crossed over to the sliding glass doors and joined her outside.

He put his arm around her waist and pulled her close to his side. "You left the apartment door unlocked."

Menhit turned to look at him. "I had a visitor while you were gone."

Aric's brows drew together. "A visitor? Who?"

"One of the men who cornered you in the alley."

He stiffened. "What?! What happened?"

"I scared him away. He seems to be very afraid of my lioness. He also seemed very interested in your bike. I think if I hadn't stopped him he would have taken it."

Aric searched Menhit's face. "You think the alley, my broken chain, and now this, is related." He didn't pose it as a question.

"Yes. I couldn't get anything from his mind, but I know these aren't random acts. Someone sent this man, just like in the alley. Whoever it is, they mean you harm."

Seeing the concerned expression she wore, Aric pulled Menhit close and kissed her forehead. "I can't think of who could want to hurt me."

"I know you said you didn't think it could be this Phil you mentioned who you work with, but he was the only one who had been alone with your bike before the chain fell off."

"I'll admit Phil and I have some bad blood between us—I beat him at the last Alleycat race—but I don't think he would go this far to...to keep me out of this one," Aric said slowly. He shook his head. "No, I can't picture Phil being this underhanded."

Menhit sighed and shook her head. "You may not want to think about him doing something like this, but not everyone is what they seem."

"I know that, but I still can't picture Phil doing it. It isn't as if the Alleycat race is a big prestigious race or anything."

"Maybe not, but maybe it means more to him than it does to you. I think you should confront him about what has happened."

Aric released Menhit and took a step back. "Menhit, I can't just go up to the guy and accuse him of sending some thugs to beat the crap out of me, or about the rest without some solid proof. If I'm wrong, he'll laugh in my face. At the end of the day, I still have to work with the guy."

Menhit crossed her arms over her chest. "So you are willing to simply wait for the next thing to happen instead of trying to do something to stop it."

"Who is to say anything more will happen? And you said so yourself, you scared off that thug a second time. I doubt he'll be back."

"More than likely, but that doesn't mean others won't be sent."

Aric knew he had to end this conversation now before it turned into a full-blown argument. He didn't want that. Pulling Menhit into his arms, he kissed her soundly. He lifted his head and gazed into her eyes. "I don't want to fight. How about I promise you I'll be more cautious? Without any real proof I can't do anything more than that."

Menhit wrapped her arms around his waist and put her head against his chest. "I can accept that, but I'm still going to worry for your safety. I would hate for anything to happen to you."

He rubbed Menhit's back. "I would hate for anything to happen to me as well."

\* \* \* \* \*

The morning of the race dawned bright and sunny with the promise of another scorching hot day. Menhit woke Aric with a kiss and sent him off to take a shower. She used the time while Aric was in the bathroom to polish his helmet that he wore when he rode his bike. Instead of using her powers to do the job, Menhit used a rag she found under the kitchen sink and tap water. His helmet wasn't really dirty and whatever it had been made from already had a certain amount of shine to it. She still did her best to make it look even better.

By the time Aric came out of the shower and joined her in the kitchen, Menhit was putting the final touches on his helmet. He arched a brow in her direction when he saw what she worked on. "Isn't that my bike helmet?"

She proudly held it out for him to take. "Yes. I decided to polish it for you. All Egypt's soldiers used to polish their helmets before they went off to battle."

Aric took the helmet and chuckled. "But I'm not going off to fight. I'm just going to be riding my bike in a race."

"In some ways it could be considered a battle. You have to beat all the other riders."

"That's true." Aric nodded when he turned his helmet to look at it from all angles. "Thanks, babe. It looks great." He then gave her a quick kiss.

Putting his helmet down on the table, he moved to the counter to make his usual breakfast smoothie. While Aric drank it at the kitchen table, they talked about their plans for the day. Aric thought it best Menhit stayed at his apartment during the time the Alleycat race took place. She started to tell him that she would like to go, but he silenced her with another quick, hard kiss.

"It's not as if you would really be able to watch me, Menhit. I have to race from one checkpoint to another along the city streets. It's really not a spectator sport. You would be stuck hanging out with my boss and anyone else at the office during the race. To be honest, I'm not comfortable with the thought of you being alone with them."

Menhit narrowed her eyes. "Why? Are you embarrassed of me?"

Aric quickly pulled her onto his lap and hugged her. "No. No, of course not. It's just Wayne, my boss, can be a bit on the nosy side. He would drive you nuts asking you a million questions. You really haven't spent a lot of time in the mortal realm yet. I don't want anyone else to know who and what you are. If you let it slip that you are an Egyptian goddess, other people would think you're a nut case. I'm sorry, but I don't want my mate locked away in a loony bin."

Menhit sucked in a breath. "What did you just call me?"

"Damn," Aric said with a chuckle. "Well, didn't I just mess up my own plans? I wanted to do this right, after the race ended." He grew serious. He locked gazes with her, so she could see all the love he felt for her shining in his eyes. "I guess there's no point waiting now. I love you, Menhit. Even though I've only known you for a few days, I feel as if I have known you forever. I can't picture you not being with me. And coming from me, that's a big deal. I never thought I would be able to settle down with a woman until I met you. I want you to be my mate."

With a cry of joy, Menhit wrapped her arms around the back of Aric's neck and kissed him with all the love she felt. When she pulled away they both were short of breath. "I love you too, Aric. You have made me complete. I have waited thousands of years to find you. The years had grown boring and stale without a mate at my side to share them with. When I first saw you in that alley and your scent awakened the part of me that had lain listless for so long, I knew you were destined to be mine. Will you let me give you immortality? You won't have godhood like I have and you'll still need to eat, drink and sleep as a mortal, but we will have eternity together."



"Yes. I want forever with you. You have made me one happy man, but I still have to ask, are you sure you want to give up your life in the immortal realm?"

Menhit nodded. "This is what I want. I'll only be happy with you, but choosing to live in the mortal realm does not mean I can never return to the immortal one. I can visit if the occasion arises."

"That makes me feel much better to hear that. I would hate to be the reason you had to cut all ties with your former life." He unwound her arms from around his neck. "I know I could sit here all day with you like this, but I can't right now. I have a race to win, as a mortal. Now up you go, before I'm late."

Menhit slid off his lap and watched Aric head for the door. She then called his name. "Wait, Aric. I want you to take something with you for luck while you race."

Running into the bedroom, Menhit picked up off the dresser the arrow she had left for Aric on the first day they had met. She hurried back and held it out. "I want you to put my arrow in your bag."

He took it and put it away. "It isn't going to suddenly burst into flames while I'm riding my bike, is it?" he asked with a chuckle.

"No," she giggled. "I have to will the flames on my arrows, but as long as you have that with you I'll be able to 'see' wherever you are. I can follow the race that way."

"Good thinking. Now I really have to go."

Aric gave her a kiss goodbye before he picked up his bike and walked out the door. Menhit hoped the next five hours went by quickly so they could celebrate the new life they would have together.

Even though it was as hot as hell out, Aric found he could keep up the pace he had set for himself. The race already half over, his times at each checkpoint came closer and closer to Phil's, who had the lead. Aric had a feeling it would be a close finish at the end.

Hoping to shave off some time, Aric decided to take some shortcuts. Turning into the first alleyway, thoughts of what had happened the last time he'd taken a shortcut flashed through his head. At least this time he didn't have a car tailing him. But that didn't stop him from looking over his shoulder every once in a while just to be sure.

Aric finally cut across the last alleyway before he had to return to the main street. As he raced between the two buildings, Phil came out of one of the side streets to ride beside him. Thinking Phil had decided to try the same shortcut, Aric leaned lower over his handlebars and put on a burst of speed. He gritted his teeth when he saw Phil managing to keep up.

As Aric racked his brain to figure out a way to lose Phil, he didn't see Phil's arm come out until it became too late. With a hard shove, Phil knocked him off balance. Unable to right himself in time, Aric fell over and skidded to a stop with his bike on top of him.

Looking up, Aric expected to see Phil way up in front. Instead, Phil turned his bike around and rode back. Aric disentangled himself from his bike and met Phil's gaze. "Why the hell did you push me?"

Phil got off his bike and carefully put it down on the ground. He didn't offer to help Aric up. He stood above him and glared. "You still haven't figured it out?"

"Figured what out?"

"I decided I wasn't going to take a chance on you beating me, so I arranged for a few little 'accidents'. But for some reason my plans backfired. I jimmied your chain the other day. I had thought if you took a nasty spill that would have put you out of the race, but somehow you only ended up with a few bruises."

Aric slowly stood. Phil had to be a nutcase to be standing there telling him his evil plans instead of using this advantage to win the race. He had to have a screw loose. When he shifted his bag on his back, he felt heat soaking through the fabric. He reached inside and wrapped his hand around Menhit's arrow, the source of the heat. Menhit had been right about Phil after all. Man, he hadn't wanted to believe someone he

worked with could be so devious. "You got those two thugs to corner me as well." Aric said it as a statement rather than a question.

"Yes. I paid them good money, and in the end, they screwed up. They babbled about seeing a lioness that shape shifted into a woman or some such nonsense. Even when I sent one of them to steal your bike he went on about the shape shifting woman being at your apartment. I guess if you want something done right you have to do it yourself."

Phil advanced on Aric and pulled a thick piece of wood about the length of his forearm out of his messenger bag. Aric slowly backed away. "What are you going to do now? Beat me? You do realize we're in the middle of a race and that the more time you spend here the less likely you'll be able to keep your lead."

"I doubt it. I figure we were so far out in front I can afford to take the time to keep you out of the rest of the race."

As Phil advanced, Aric looked behind Phil and grinned. Phil was going to get a big wake-up call. "I think you're about to learn firsthand what scared the crap out of your hired muscle."

A loud feline roar brought Phil up short. Aric smiled when Phil slowly turned to face Menhit in her lioness form. The look on Phil's face was comical when his eyes went round and his mouth gasped like a fish out of water. Letting the piece of wood drop from his hands, Phil slowly circled around Menhit to where he had left his bike. Menhit snarled as she followed Phil with her eyes. Before he could hop on his bike and race away, Menhit lunged for him. Phil went down hard on the pavement on his stomach. Menhit hooked a paw with claws extended in his t-shirt under his shoulder and rolled him over onto his back. She let loose another loud roar, giving Phil a good look at all her sharp teeth. Then, before he could move, she clamped her jaws around his throat. From his angle, Aric saw she didn't draw any blood, but it was enough to have Phil whimpering like a baby. As threats went, Aric had to think Menhit's did a better than average job.

Menhit released Phil's throat and slowly backed away. She snarled her lip at him and growled. With his face completely white, Phil carefully stood with his hands held out in front of him. Not taking his eyes off Menhit, he bent down behind him and reached for his bike. Once he had it upright, he threw a leg over the seat and took off.

Aric moved to Menhit's side and stroked the top of her leonine head. "How did you know to come?"

The lioness's body blurred and Menhit shifted to her human form. She smiled. "You are my mate. I'll always know when you have need of me."

Aric put his arm around her waist and pulled her against his side. "Always nice to know. How about you do your thing and flash us back to the apartment?"

Menhit gave him a confused look. "What about the race?"

He waved her question away. "It doesn't matter anymore. I have you. That's all that matters."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes. I also have a feeling my bike messenger days are over."

Menhit reached up and placed both her hands on the sides of his face. "Good, because I find I dislike being away from you. Besides, you really don't need to work. I have plenty of riches back in the immortal realm I can bring here to make our lives comfortable."

In a blink of an eye, Aric found himself back in his apartment with Menhit. His bike lay on the floor next to him. "I could get used to that. Let me wash up and then I'll give you the present I bought for you."

Menhit tightened her hold. "First, I want to give you a present."

Aric sucked in a breath when a sensation of power shot from Menhit's hands and all the way through his body. He gasped. Much like being zapped by lightning, at least that is what Aric thought it would feel like, the power coursed through every inch of his body. He felt it sink into his very cells. It didn't hurt, it just felt strange. Aric placed his

hands over top Menhit's and held her gaze. He felt as if he could do anything. He felt as if he could take on the world and come out on top. The power moving through him pushed away the tiredness he had felt from hours of racing. Now, Aric thought he would be able to ride in two back-to-back Alleycat races and still would be raring to go for another.

When the power slowly receded, Aric swallowed. "Did you just make me immortal?"

"Yes." Menhit pressed her lips to his. "Now we'll be together forever. We are true mates."

"I'm not so sure the ring I bought you is going to be able to top that gift," he said with a laugh.

Menhit smiled then flashed their clothes away. She stepped into his arms and brushed up against him. "I'm sure I'll love this ring you have for me, but I think I want you to give me your body."

Picking Menhit up, Aric carried her to the bedroom. "That, I can do, but first, I'm going to give you my gift. I promised myself I would do this right."

Aric put her down so she stood at the foot of the bed. He went over to his dresser and opened the top drawer. Fishing around inside it, he smiled when he pulled his hand out with a blue velvet covered jewelry box in it. He went back to Menhit and went down on one knee while he looked at her lovingly before he opened the box. A single round cut diamond set in a simple gold band sat inside.

Aric cleared his throat. "I know the diamond isn't very big, and as a goddess you have probably gotten larger ones, but it was the best I could afford. Anyway, Menhit, will you marry me?"

Menhit gave him a radiant smile and nodded. "Yes, I'll marry you. And the diamond is more priceless because it is you who gave it to me."

Standing, Aric took the ring out of the jewelry box and placed it on Menhit's ring finger on her left hand. It fit perfectly. "Beautiful. Just like the woman who wears it."

Aric pulled her close and placed his lips on hers. He kissed her with all the love he felt for her. Now that she wore his ring, it seemed more real that they would be together forever. When their kiss grew more intense, Aric picked her up and placed Menhit on the bed.

He kissed her slowly, deeply as Menhit wrapped her arms around him. Aric cupped her breast and rubbed his thumb back and forth across her taut nipple. Lying between her spread thighs, the head of his cock pressed up against her slick opening, he felt as if he died and gone to heaven. The woman beneath him stirred his body, bringing him to full arousal with a few strokes of her hand.

Needing the feel of her body closing around his, Aric pushed his cock inside Menhit's welcoming heat. With his weight supported on his bent arms, he moved in and out of her. Menhit locked gazes with him. The look of love she gave him had his cock hardening even more.

He set a faster pace when Menhit wrapped her legs around his waist. Their heavy breathing filled the room as he pushed them both closer and closer to climax. When the first wave of her orgasm hit Menhit, Aric groaned loudly as he too reached his. They lay panting, clinging to one another. He knew forever wouldn't be nearly enough to show her how much he loved her. But he would gladly spend the rest of eternity trying to.

*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.

The author welcomes comments from readers. You can find her website and email address on her [author bio page](#) at [www.ellorascave.com](http://www.ellorascave.com).

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