

ELLORA'S CAVE PRESENTS

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THE
Goddess'
Goddess
Revealed GIRDLE

MARISA
CHENERY

The Goddess' Girdle

Marisa Chenery

Goddess Revealed, book three.

When Cayden picks up the girdle he finds in the basement of the Royal Ontario Museum, his head is filled with images of a beautiful woman. She becomes all he can think about, and he's convinced he's losing his mind—until she appears in his apartment, pushes him to the floor and has wild, hot sex with him.

Shesmetet is an Egyptian goddess who lives in the immortal realm, but as soon as she sees Cayden, she knows that he's her mate, the one who will make her complete. But for them to be together, Shesmetet will have to learn to live in the mortal realm...and Cayden will have to give up his life as he knows it.

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The Goddess' Girdle

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THE GODDESS' GIRDLE

Marisa Chenery

Chapter One

Cayden Granger looked at the clock that hung on his office wall, pleased to see it was almost lunchtime. He had arranged to meet up with his friend Neil for lunch. Both he and Neil worked at the ROM, the Royal Ontario Museum, in Toronto. Neil was an Egyptologist, while Cayden worked as a graphic designer.

Cayden made his way down to the basement of the museum. He knew Neil had planned to work all day down there. The museum had received some new Egyptian artifacts the other day and it was Neil's job to catalogue them and decide which ones would go on display and which would go into storage.

He found Neil working alone at one of the long worktables. Neil looked up when Cayden approached. "Lunchtime already? I thought I just got down here."

Cayden snorted. "It's after twelve. I figured I would have to get you. Once you get with your artifacts, nothing else seems to exist."

Neil chuckled. "So true. And there are some really great pieces here to keep me distracted from the outside world."

"Like that one?" Cayden asked, nodding to the belt that had a bunch of beads hanging from it.

"Exactly." Neil picked it up, holding it so the beads hung down. "This is believed to be the Shesmet Girdle, which is supposed to be associated with the Egyptian goddess Shesmetet."

"Okay," Cayden said. "Like that means anything to me."

"Ah, come on. You can't tell me you're not just a little bit interested."

Cayden eyed the belt and the beaded apron attached to it. "What's it supposed to do?"

Neil shook his head and rolled his eyes. "It doesn't *do* anything. I guess its only claim to fame is that it was worn by kings during the early dynastic period and the Old Kingdom."

"Like that just didn't go over my head." Cayden made a face as he looked closer at the girdle. "It looks a bit on the feminine side for a man, if you ask me. And, personally, I wouldn't be caught dead wearing that thing."

"A little insecure in your masculinity? I don't know, Cayden, it may be just what you need to attract that lucky lady who will one day be yours." Neil stood up and placed the girdle around Cayden's waist. Neil held it against Cayden then shook his head. "Nope, I thought wrong. The girdle just isn't for you. You couldn't pull it off even if you wanted to."

Cayden stiffened as a jolt of energy shot through him where the girdle touched his body. He almost gasped out loud as his head suddenly filled with the images of a beautiful woman. Her brown eyes seemed to look right through him. Her long black hair fell around her shoulders and her lush lips parted as she held out her hands. And the dress she wore, some kind of tight, pale yellow linen sheath dress that fell to her shins, hugging her curvy body in all the right places. A surge of need so intense that it made him gasp slammed through his body making his cock grow instantly hard.

"Are you okay, Cayden?" Neil asked with concern. "You look a little funny all of a sudden."

As if he suddenly realized he still held the girdle against Cayden, Neil pulled it away and the images of the woman disappeared, leaving Cayden with an intense longing to see more of her. Instead of snatching up the girdle to see if the images would return, he forced himself to move so he stood on the opposite side of the table. He cleared his throat. "I'm fine. I'm just hungry. Let's get out of here and get some food."

Neil gave him a stare that said he didn't quite believe Cayden. "Okay. Are you sure you aren't coming down with something?"

Cayden let his gaze run over the girdle one last time before he focused back on his friend. "I'm sure. Come on. You need to get out of this basement for a little while. The sun is shining. You do remember what the sun is?"

"Ha, ha. I'm not that bad."

"On a scale of one to ten, I'd say you're about an eight. Now let's haul ass or lunch will be over before we know it."

"I'm coming. You would swear you hadn't eaten in a week."

Cayden patted his stomach. "You know me, I have a hollow leg."

"It must be all that weightlifting you do. You're all muscle and no —"

"Don't you dare say it, little man, or I'll have to squash you like a bug." At six foot four and over two hundred pounds, he dwarfed Neil, who stood at five-eight and had the build of a teenage boy.

"No bug squashing today, please."

As Neil came around the table, Cayden glanced back at the girdle. The urge to pick it up, to touch it, became hard to ignore. He gave himself a mental shake. He had to pull it together. Leaving the basement with Neil at his side, Cayden tried not to think about the Egyptian relic or the woman he had seen in his head.

* * * * *

For the rest of the day, Cayden couldn't stop thinking about the woman. More than once, he thought he would just go down to the basement and touch the girdle again, and it wasn't because he became aroused when he thought of her. No, he only wanted to touch it to see if the woman would appear again inside his head. Somehow he had coincidentally conjured the woman up when the girdle had been held against him. But when he made a mess of a project he was working on because his thoughts had strayed to her yet again, Cayden knew he only lied to himself. Like a horny teenager with his first nudie magazine, all he could think about was getting another look.

Adjusting an erection in his pants for the umpteenth time, Cayden knew he couldn't go on like this. He knew getting this obsessive over a woman he had seen in his head meant he was losing it. He hadn't been this horny over someone of the opposite sex in years. But here he was, turned on to the point of pain by a woman who didn't even exist except for in his head.

By the end of the work day, he couldn't take it anymore. Cayden knew he had to return to the basement and touch the girdle. It was either that or go insane.

Unluckily for him, Neil didn't seem to be around. Cayden cursed. *Now what?* About ready to leave, Cayden spotted the girdle on top the worktable where Neil had been working that morning.

Cayden quickly walked over to the worktable and picked up the girdle. Just like when Neil had held it against him, a jolt of energy shot through his hands. Images of the same woman once again played inside his head and, from the look she gave him, he swore she saw him as well.

The sound of someone clearing their throat brought Cayden back to his surroundings. He quickly placed the girdle back on the table and turned to face Neil. The woman in his head had disappeared now that he was no longer touching it. He turned and gave Neil a smile. "You're back."

Neil gave him a questioning look. "I thought you said the girdle was too girly for you? But here I find you fondling it."

Cayden crossed his arms over his chest. "For your information, I wasn't fondling it. I just wanted a second look at it."

"Whatever you say. So what's up? I thought you would have been gone by now."

"I thought I would check to make sure we were still on for Friday night." As Cayden watched, Neil picked up the girdle and placed it in one of the numbered drawers that ran along the wall.

"Tomorrow night is fine. Do you want me to bring the beer?" Neil asked as he turned back to face Cayden.

"Yes."

"Sounds like a plan."

"Good. I'm on my way out now, so I'll see you tomorrow morning."

Cayden forced himself to turn and walk away before he did something stupid like try to find some way to take the girdle home. It was pretty pathetic when the thought of seeing the woman in his head had become the highlight of his day.

* * * * *

Cayden arrived at his downtown apartment with a bag of Chinese takeout he had picked up on the way home. Once he replaced his dress slacks with a pair of blue jeans and his dress shirt with a black t-shirt, he headed to the kitchen to eat.

He'd just started to eat at the kitchen table when the sound of a loud purr filled the room. Cayden sat with his fork halfway to his mouth as the purring continued. The sound seemed to be coming from under the table. When something grabbed the material of one of his pant legs and gave it a yank, he slowly put down his fork and put his hands on top of the table. He pushed back his chair and bent his head to peer under the tablecloth. What he saw had him up so fast his chair toppled over. When a large cat, a lioness to be exact, came out from under the table Cayden tried to back up, but he only managed to trip over his fallen chair. With a thud, he fell on his backside onto the floor.

Cayden bit back a string of curses when the lioness moved closer, stuck her nose into the crook of his neck and gave him a good sniff. He froze in place at the feel of her raspy tongue coming out and licking the side of his neck. The lioness's purrs seemed to grow louder as she pressed her nose to his.

"Nice kitty," Cayden said softly. "You don't want to eat me. I don't taste very good."

The lioness pulled back slightly, but she kept her gaze on him. Cayden then watched with amazement as the outline of the cat's body started to blur and shift. In a

matter of seconds, the lioness was gone and in its place stood the woman he'd seen in his head when he'd touched the girdle. She knelt down on the floor next to him and smiled. He knew he should be trying to get away, do something other than becoming increasingly aroused as he stared at her. A normal person would be scared shitless at seeing a shapeshifter, but for some stupid reason he wasn't. His brain was clouded with lust. That being the case, Cayden lost the ability to think and just acted. With a growl of need, Cayden pounced on her and bore her down to the floor.

* * * * *

Shesmetet hadn't been sure how well this mortal would take to her appearing before him, especially in her lioness form. But his reaction when she shifted to her human form surprised her, to say the least. That he didn't seem afraid of what she was made coming to the mortal realm well worth the risk to be with him.

When he had first come in contact with her girdle, an instant connection had formed between them. And through that connection, Shesmetet knew he wouldn't just be *any* mortal to her. He was her mate. The one who would complete her, make her feel whole and her soul sing. The only reason why she hadn't rushed to be with him was the very real danger her presence could put him in. Even though she was no longer worshipped for the protection she offered mortals against demons of slaughter, it did not mean demons wouldn't sense her presence in the mortal realm. She was charged with the duty of keeping demon-kind out of the mortal realm and eradicating the ones who harmed the mortals. More than one demon had felt the pain of her sharp teeth and claws. She also knew her coming here could very well draw a demon to her mate, for they had learned to sense her presence in the mortal realm and they would use anyone close to her to try to bring her down, but the need to be with him had been too much for her to ignore.

As her mate's lips took hers in an open-mouthed kiss, Shesmetet purred and kissed him back. His hands seemed to be everywhere, cupping and stroking her body. She felt the length of his erection through the article of clothing he wore where it pressed

against her thigh. Shesmetet fisted her hands in his longish dark brown hair and increased the pressure of her lips. She rocked her hips against his cock, causing wetness to pool between her legs.

This was how she had wanted her mate when she made the decision to come to the mortal realm—fast and hard. No reservations on his part. Being what she was, Shesmetet knew she couldn't stay with him for long. She longed to tell him what he was to her. With a moan of need, she reached between them and cupped his cock through his leg coverings. Her mate seemed to be a big man in every sense of the word.

He lifted his head with a moan and propped himself on his elbows so he could stare down at her. With a shake of his head, he seemed to come back to himself. "What the hell am I doing?"

Shesmetet leaned up and ran her tongue along the inside of his ear. That elicited another moan. "You're about to make love to me." She nipped at his chin.

His hazel eyes briefly shut as he pushed his engorged cock against her hand. "I shouldn't."

"Why not?"

"Well, for one thing I have no idea who you are, or what you are. I really don't make it a practice to pounce on beautiful women the instant I see them. Real or imagined. And if I could actually think straight, right about now I would be freaking out, since you appeared out of nowhere."

Shesmetet chuckled. "I wanted you to pounce." She released his sex then reached up to caress his cheek. "I am Shesmetet. As for what I am, I'm a goddess, as well as your mate. For now, that is all you need to know. What is my mate's name?" Shesmetet shoved her hands up his shirt and ran them along his back while she rubbed her hip against his shaft.

"Ahh...ahhh, my name is Cayden. Damn, I can't think straight with you under me like this. You feel too good. I don't understand any of this. And seeing you in that tight dress of yours isn't helping me any."

A smile played along her lips. "All you had to do was ask for me to remove it." Shesmetet willed her dress from her body.

Cayden's eyes dilated with arousal as he gazed at her naked breasts. He drew in a deep breath. "That did *not* help. I can't believe I'm going to say this, but I think we should wait before we have sex. How can you be possible? Where did you come from? And why the hell am I not freaking out? I recognize your name as not just any goddess, but an Egyptian goddess. I must be hanging around Neil too much. His love for everything ancient Egyptian must be rubbing off, and now I'm having hallucinations about an Egyptian goddess. A sexy, gorgeous one that I want take to bed until neither one of us can walk."

Shesmetet couldn't allow Cayden to put off their joining for much longer. With each minute that ticked by, the risk she put him in grew. Only her longing to be with the other half of her soul had pushed her to come to be with him for what little time she could have. She didn't have time to try to convince him with words that she was no hallucination. "No more talking. I need to feel you buried inside me. Now."

Cayden groaned when she pulled his head down and took his lips in a searing kiss. As she sucked his tongue inside her mouth, he seemed to lose his will to resist. His tongue stroked hers while she undid his leg coverings and shoved her hand inside. Wrapping her hand around his hard length, she pumped it up and down. Cayden's hips jerked and he moaned. The feel of him, hard and heavy in her hand, made her pussy ache to be filled. The empty part of her soul warmed as she touched him. Joining her body to his would drive out the emptiness she felt inside.

Releasing her mouth, Cayden kissed a path along her jaw and down the side of her neck. He pulled her hand away and shifted down her body. With featherlight kisses, he worked his way along her collarbones and down to her breasts. He cupped one in his hand as he swirled his tongue around its taut peak. Shesmetet pressed closer as he did the same to the other before he sucked her nipple into his mouth. Cayden then trailed

his other hand down between her legs. She moaned when he found her clit and circled it with a finger.

Cayden turned his attention to her other breast. Shesmetet arched her back as his finger left her clit and moved to the opening of her body. She clutched at his shoulders when he pushed a finger and then another, inside her core. Pumping his fingers in and out, Cayden left her breast and licked a path down to her stomach.

She then cried out when he forced her legs further apart with his shoulders and put his tongue where his fingers had been. "Yes," she moaned. "Just like that."

Shesmetet felt her orgasm inch closer as Cayden then licked and sucked at her clit. It felt so good to have him pleasure her with his mouth. She rocked her hips against him, needing more. She whimpered with need as Cayden spread her folds and jabbed his stiffened tongue inside. It was enough to send her over the edge. Threading her fingers in his hair, she moaned, her climax taking her over.

Cayden crawled back up her body. "I can't wait any longer."

He dragged his short-sleeved tunic over his head and threw it away. He pushed his leg coverings down past his hips, his hard cock bobbing with his movements. Unable to wait for him to remove his leg coverings the rest of the way, Shesmetet willed them away. She spread her legs wider when he came to settle between them. The tip of his cock brushed up against her pussy as he claimed her lips. She wrapped her legs around his waist after he reared back and plunged inside.

While he pumped between her legs, Shesmetet squeezed her inner muscles around his shaft. He filled her to capacity; their two bodies fit perfectly together. As he moved inside her, Shesmetet gloried in the feel of his hard cock stretching her. His thick length stroked her clit with each thrust. He braced his upper body on his hands and rammed into her harder, faster. His deep moans filled the room while his cock slid in and out of her pussy.

She clutched at his shoulders, another orgasm starting to build. This time when she climaxed, Cayden came with her. As she rode her release, Cayden threw back his head

and moaned. He rammed into her one final time, his cock pulsing deep inside her. Out of breath, he collapsed on top of her.

Shesmetet wanted nothing more than to lie in her mate's arms for the rest of the night, but she knew it couldn't be. Cupping his face in her hands, she gave him a hard kiss. "I must go."

Cayden kissed the tip of her nose. "I'm not ready for you to run off just yet. The night is far from over. I want you again, but this time in the bed."

She shook her head. "I can't." But, oh, how she wished she could. Their bodies still joined, she felt Cayden's cock already start to harden once again.

He flexed his hips and gave her a crooked grin. "I'll make it well worth your while."

Fisting her hands in his hair, Shesmetet kissed Cayden knowing it would have to tide her over until she felt ready to take the chance to come to him again, if ever. She then did the hardest thing she had ever had to do—she willed herself back to the immortal realm.

Chapter Two

Cayden rolled over onto his back and groaned, fully aware he lay naked on the kitchen floor. He flung an arm over his eyes. Shesmetet had just disappeared into thin air. If he still didn't have the taste of her in his mouth, or her scent on his skin, he could have almost convinced himself that she hadn't been real. That he just hadn't made love to a goddess in the middle of his kitchen floor, after she had shape-shifted from a lioness. Goose bumps spread over his skin just thinking about it.

Holy crap! He'd just made love to an Egyptian goddess.

Yes, he had, but it wasn't as if he could tell anyone about it. They would drag him away in a straightjacket if he so much as uttered a word of it. The rational, levelheaded side of him wanted to reason away what had just happened. But there really wasn't any way he could not accept Shesmetet had been as real as he when his body still held traces of their intimacy.

He slammed the side of his fisted hand on the floor. *Why had she left?* She had disappeared almost as suddenly as she had appeared. His head swam with a million unanswered questions and his body ached with unfulfilled desire. The one time hadn't been enough.

Sitting up, Cayden ran his hands through his hair. Now what? He wanted Shesmetet to come back, but he had no idea how to get in contact with her. The only connection he knew of was the girdle, which would be safely locked up in the ROM at this time of night.

Cayden cursed and picked his t-shirt off the floor. Looking around for his jeans, he couldn't find them. He guessed when Shesmetet had made them disappear into thin air before they had made love his jeans hadn't poofed back after she'd left. He headed to his bedroom to put on another pair before he returned to the kitchen. He righted the

chair where it still lay on the floor and sat down. The Chinese food was cold, but Cayden couldn't be bothered to heat it up.

While he chewed, he thought over the brief, very brief, conversation that had taken place between him and Shesmetet before they had made love. She had told him she was his mate and he was hers. How she knew this the instant she met him, Cayden had no idea. And being mates sounded so permanent. True, he lusted after Shesmetet and had the instant he'd seen her inside his head, but he knew his feelings weren't that deep. He *was* obsessing over her, something he'd never experienced with another woman, but who knew how long that would last. Given his track record, it could be over in a matter of weeks. But a small part of Cayden, deep down inside, felt that wouldn't be the case with Shesmetet. Even now, all he could think about was having her again, being around her, learning more about who and what she was.

Cayden spent the remainder of the evening watching television. When the hour grew late, he forced himself to go to bed. He still had to get up early for work the next day. Disappointed that Shesmetet hadn't returned, Cayden dragged himself off to bed.

* * * * *

After a fitful sleep where he'd tossed and turned for most of the night, Cayden woke up feeling like crap. It didn't help any that he also woke up with a raging hard-on. He blamed that on the erotic dreams he'd had of Shesmetet.

Cranky and out of sorts, Cayden got out of bed and headed for the shower. It helped clear the cobwebs out of his head, but it did nothing for the erection he still sported. He'd thought of relieving himself, but he knew it wouldn't last long. All it would take to get him aroused again would be thoughts of Shesmetet. If the morning turned out to be any indication of what his day would be like, Cayden had a feeling it wouldn't be pleasant. As far as he could tell, the only bright spot of the day would be when he could touch the girdle—at least, he hoped it would be. He also decided to pick Neil's brain about Shesmetet. Cayden wanted to know everything about her.

He left early for lunch and headed down to the basement of the museum. He figured Neil would still be working down there. Sure enough, Cayden found Neil bent over another artifact at the same table where he had worked yesterday. He looked down the length of the table where his friend worked and noticed the girdle wasn't with the other pieces spread out on it. Damn. Now he had to somehow bring up the girdle in conversation.

When Neil didn't look up, Cayden loudly cleared his throat. "Are you ready for lunch?"

Neil glanced up at him, then at his watch. "Aren't you a bit early?"

Cayden cleared his throat again and tried to sound nonchalant. "No girdle today?"

"No. Not today."

"I want to see it," he blurted out. *Real smooth, Cayden*, he thought to himself. "I mean, can I see it again?"

Neil gave him an odd look before he said slowly, "It's in drawer number nineteen."

Cayden walked over to the shallow drawer and pulled it open. The girdle lay on the bottom of it. His heart started to beat faster when he reached inside and gently touched it with a finger. Zilch. Nada. Nothing happened when his finger touched one of the beads. No images of Shesmetet appeared inside his head. No jolt of energy. With his back to Neil, Cayden closed his eyes for a few seconds and took a deep breath. A sense of disappointment swept through him, as well as an intense wave of longing for Shesmetet.

While he slowly closed the drawer, Cayden said, "You told me yesterday that the girdle was probably associated with the Egyptian goddess Shesmetet. What do you know about her?" He turned around to find Neil staring at him as if he'd suddenly grown two heads.

"Why the sudden interest in the girdle and a goddess?"

Cayden walked over to Neil. "I'm just interested, all right? Maybe you're starting to rub off on me, Mr. Egyptologist. Are you going to tell me or not?"

"No need to get touchy. I don't know a whole lot about Shesmetet, but I'll tell you what I do know. Shesmetet is a protective goddess. She was called on to protect against demons of slaughter."

Given the size of Shesmetet, Cayden had a hard time believing she could protect anyone from a demon. The top of her head would barely reach Cayden's shoulder. "How exactly did she do that?"

"Supposedly with magical spells. Sorry, but that's all I know."

Cayden nodded. "Okay. That's more than I knew before." He pulled out a chair on the other side of the table and sat down. "I guess I'll wait here until you're ready to go."

Neil stared at him. "Are you sure you're all right, Cayden? You aren't exactly acting like yourself right now. Maybe it isn't such a great idea for me to come over tonight."

Sitting alone for another night in his apartment while he pined for Shesmetet was the last thing Cayden wanted. If anything, a few beers with Neil should help keep his mind off her for a little while. "I'm fine. You're not canceling on me tonight. We both need to kick back with a few beers and enjoy a movie. You work too hard."

"Are you sure?" Neil asked.

"Of course I'm sure. Now shut up and get back to work so we can get something to eat sometime soon."

Neil chuckled. "I just need a few more minutes."

Cayden silently watched Neil. Thoughts of Shesmetet and how it had felt to hold her in his arms flitted through his head. He wanted her back, but since he hadn't been able to see her in his head when he'd touched the girdle, he had a feeling he wouldn't be seeing her again any time soon. Surprisingly, that thought hurt more than Cayden would have expected.

* * * * *

After a long day of work, Cayden went home to his empty apartment. Even though he knew she wouldn't be there, the first thing he did when he walked through the door was look for Shesmetet. He knew he shouldn't have felt disappointed when he didn't find her, but that didn't stop him from feeling it anyway. All day at work he'd thought of her, unable to get her out of his head. He was well and truly obsessed. If she had been a mortal woman and she hadn't wanted to have anything to do with him, Cayden could picture himself turning into a stalker. Not a good thought.

Once he changed out of his work clothes, Cayden whipped up a quick meal, which he ate in the living room. He didn't know if he would ever again be able to go into his kitchen and not think of how he had made love to Shesmetet on the floor.

An hour later, and right on time as usual, Neil rang his buzzer to be let up to the apartment. Cayden met him at the door and ushered him inside. "I'll take that," he said as he took the six-pack of beer from Neil. Cayden opened the carton and handed a beer to his friend. "Here, take this and go sit in the living room. I'll just stick the rest in the fridge."

That done, Cayden opened a beer for himself and went to join Neil in the living room. He turned on the DVD player and stuck in the movie he had rented. "This is supposed to be good."

"As long as it has a few good explosion scenes and fast-paced action, it's all good."

Cayden chuckled. "Then this should be right up your alley." For a man who had chosen a career of digging up moldering bones and studying musty relics, Neil liked his movies full of shootouts, car chases and things that blew up.

Halfway through the movie, Cayden thought he heard a sound coming from his bedroom. He cocked his head in that direction and waited, but the sound didn't come again. A few minutes later the sound came again, this time louder. It sounded as if someone was walking around inside his bedroom.

Deciding to investigate, Cayden got up. Neil, who had become totally engrossed in the movie, didn't say anything when he walked out of the living room. Inside his

bedroom, he turned on the light. He grunted in surprise as he found himself slammed up against the wall as Shesmetet threw herself into his arms. She tunneled her fingers through his hair and brought his head down to devour his mouth. Cayden wrapped his arms around her waist and hauled her against him while he kissed her back. He was about to walk her backward toward his bed when he heard the sound of a loud explosion coming from the television.

Cayden disentangled Shesmetet's hands from his hair and put some space between them. "You came back," he said quietly.

"I couldn't stay away any longer. I'm just not strong enough. I need to be with you. I don't want to give you up."

When Shesmetet would have stepped back into his arms, Cayden put some more distance between them. "Wait. I have company over."

Shesmetet gave him a coy look as she reached out, stroked a hand down his chest before she cupped the bulge in the front of his jeans. "Then make him leave. I want you in your bed, naked, with my mouth all over you."

Cayden groaned and his cock hardened beneath her palm. He took hold of her wrist and pulled her hand away. "I'll get rid of Neil, but this time we aren't going to have drive-by sex. Understand? We're going to talk first, then we'll have our fun."

Shesmetet opened her mouth to say something, but Cayden silenced her with his lips. He gave her a hard kiss before he pulled away and left the bedroom, making sure he shut the door behind him. Cayden hurried into the living room and hit the stop button on the DVD player.

"Hey," Neil protested. "The movie isn't over yet. And it was at a good part, too."

Once he had the DVD out of the player, Cayden put it in its case and gave it to Neil. "Here, take it home with you so you can watch the end. Sorry, but I have to cut the evening short." He hurried Neil over to the apartment door.

Neil stared up at him. "Is something wrong? Are you feeling okay?" He looked at Cayden closer. "Your hair is sticking up on end in places and you look a little flushed."

Cayden quickly ran his fingers through his hair. "Yeah, that's it. I think I've come down with something. My stomach feels kind of funny."

"I'm out of here then. I don't need to come down with whatever you have. Are you sure you don't mind if I take the movie home?"

"No." Cayden opened the apartment door and gestured for Neil to leave.

"All right then. I'll bring it to work with me on Monday."

"Sounds good."

Cayden shut and locked the door as soon as Neil stepped out into the hallway. Neil now taken care of, Cayden rushed back to his bedroom. Shesmetet lay naked on his bed with the sheets only up to her waist. He shook his head. "Oh, no, you don't. I told you we were going to talk first."

Shesmetet flipped back the covers to reveal the rest of her. She patted the space next to her on the mattress. "Take your clothes off and come lie next to me. We don't have much time."

Cayden crossed his arms over his chest, mostly to stop himself from doing what she'd asked. "No. I will not take my clothes off until we've had a little chat." No sooner had he said those words his clothes disappeared, leaving him completely naked. "Now you're just not playing fair." Cayden felt his cock become fully engorged as Shesmetet's gaze lowered to it and she licked her lips. The woman would be the death of him yet. "I'm not getting into that bed until you at least tell me what the hurry is all about."

Shesmetet's face grew serious as she moved her gaze up to his face. "It's not safe."

"What isn't safe?"

"Me being here with you in the mortal realm."

"Why?"

"Because they could follow me to you."

"Who are they?" Cayden felt as if he were pulling teeth just to get the answers he wanted out of Shesmetet.

With a heavy sigh, she sat up and pulled the covers over her chest. "Demons. They can sense my presence when I'm in the mortal realm. Since I'm one of their greatest foes, they will track me down and try to do me harm. The shorter time I spend here the harder it is for them to pinpoint where I am exactly. I shouldn't be here, I put you at risk, but I can't stay away from you."

Cayden went and sat on the bed next to Shesmetet. "So you want to have a quickie then disappear again? What if I don't want that? What if I want you to stay the night instead?"

"I told you why I can't stay."

"That's not a good enough reason, Shesmetet. I'm a big boy. I can look after myself and who's to say any demons will come."

Shesmetet gave him a wry look. "They'll come. They always do."

"They haven't yet."

"It's only a matter of time."

Cayden sighed. "There's a connection between us, but that doesn't mean I'm going to sleep with you only to lose you the second we complete the act. I'll start to feel a little used, especially since I have no way to get in contact with you. Now I don't even have the girdle as a go-between since it didn't seem to work today."

"I severed our connection with the girdle to keep you safe."

Cayden sighed. "I know you feel you're looking out for my welfare, but at least let me have a say in your decisions since they affect me as well." He picked up one of her hands and laced their fingers together. "Stay the night with me." When she didn't say anything, Cayden asked, "What will your answer be, Shesmetet? Will you stay the night? If your answer is no, I want you to leave. So which will it be?"

Chapter Three

Cayden forced himself not to say anything else while he waited for Shesmetet to answer. He could practically see the wheels turning in her head as she thought it over. He really didn't want her to leave, but being used by a woman just to scratch an itch didn't appeal to him, no matter how badly he wanted her. And he wanted Shesmetet, bad.

Shesmetet gave him a sad smile. "I just found you. I don't want to give you up."

"Then don't. You're a goddess. You must be powerful enough to do some damage to a demon. You may think staying away will protect me, but who's to say they don't already know about your visits here and aren't waiting to catch me alone to draw you out?"

Her eyes widened. Cayden gave her a half smile. "There, you see? You can keep me much safer if you stay." He leaned in and kissed the corner of her mouth. "It will give us a lot more time to enjoy each other."

With a breathy sigh, Shesmetet turned her head to the side, letting Cayden kiss the side of her neck. "Mmmm. You win. I'll stay."

"That's all I needed to hear."

Gathering her up in his arms, Cayden took her mouth in a hard kiss. He pushed his tongue past her lips as he lowered her down onto the bed. Shesmetet's arms wrapped around his neck. He then pulled the sheet that covered her out from between them. Cayden moaned at the feel of her taut nipples brushing against his chest. Now that he had her under him, he wanted to touch and taste every inch of her, but Shesmetet had other ideas.

With a shove, she pushed him onto his back. She straddled his thighs as she left his mouth and trailed kisses along his jaw to his ear. Her tongue swirled inside it, making

him shiver. She nipped at his earlobe. His heart beat faster as she shifted lower and placed her lips across his chest and down to his nipple. Shesmetet dragged her teeth along the small nub before she swirled her tongue around it. Cayden fisted his hand in the sheets beneath him while she continued down to his abs. As she went lower, her long hair tickled his stomach.

"I love the feel of your mouth on me," Cayden moaned.

"I'm going to taste every inch of you," Shesmetet replied in a husky voice.

His hips jerked when he felt her warm breath on the tip of his cock. She trailed her fingers down his shaft then back up to the head, drawing a long moan out of him. The first brush of her tongue as she circled the head of his shaft made Cayden lift his head to watch her pleasure him. The sight of her tongue laving the length of him made him harden even more.

Shesmetet's purrs filled the room as she took a firm hold of his erection and took him inside her mouth. The feel of her sucking on his cock as she slid it in and out of her mouth almost made Cayden come right then. With a groan, he fought it back. When he did come, he wanted to be buried to the hilt inside her pussy, hearing her moan his name with her own release. The feel of her mouth on him as her hand squeezed the base of his shaft, had Cayden lifting his hips off the mattress in time with her strokes. Shesmetet took more of his length and purred again. The sound vibrated along his shaft, shooting waves of pleasure down the length of his cock to his balls.

Knowing he couldn't take much more, Cayden tugged on her arm. "Enough. Put me inside you."

She swiped her tongue along the length of his shaft one final time before she crawled up his body. With her hands braced on either side of his head, she positioned herself over him. She then pushed down until she had completely impaled herself on his thick shaft.

Cayden grasped Shesmetet's hips as she slowly rode him up and down. Being deep inside her, with her inner walls squeezing around his shaft, he knew he wouldn't last

very long. He lifted his head off the pillow and sucked the nipple that hovered so invitingly in front of him into his mouth. Shesmetet moaned when he alternated between drawing on her nipple and swirling his tongue around the taut peak. She rode him faster, harder, causing him to lift his hips to match the pace she set. His cock grew even harder and she whimpered with pleasure.

Knowing he would soon reach the point of no return, Cayden released her nipple and placed a finger where their bodies were joined. "Come for me, Shesmetet."

He looked down as he stroked Shesmetet's clit. The sight of his cock sliding in and out of her wet pussy pushed his arousal even higher. Unable to look away, he continued to pound into her until he pushed her over the edge into a climax. Her head fell back with a moan while her inner walls spasmed around him, fisting his cock. Cayden's climax tore through him as he grabbed her hips to hold her to him. Wave after wave of pleasure shot through him.

Shesmetet collapsed on his chest. Cayden held her tight while they fought to catch their breath. As she lay with her head nestled under his chin, he realized sex with Shesmetet didn't even compare to what he had experienced in the past.

Shesmetet lifted her head. He couldn't help but notice how her lips were puffy from his kisses. "Do you need to go to sleep?"

Cayden chuckled. "Not yet. Why do you ask?"

She took her lower lip between her teeth while she stroked his chest. "I want to make love again, but I know mortals need much more sleep than the gods. I don't want to tire you out."

He shook his head and snorted. "I am by no means tired. I intend to put this night to good use."

Shesmetet moved off him and snuggled up against his side with her head pillowed on his chest. "That's good."

Cayden sucked in a breath when she reached down and trailed her fingers along his shaft. Surprisingly, he felt his cock start to stir. Even though they'd just made love, he

still hungered for her. He didn't think he would ever get enough. As she took his cock in her hand and pumped it up and down, Cayden sucked in a sharp breath. He let her pleasure him that way until he was once again fully erect.

Pulling her hand away, he shifted so he lay on his side facing her. He claimed her lips in a kiss as he stroked his hand down her waist to her thigh. Cupping her bottom, he urged her closer, then hooked her leg over his arm. Cayden lifted her leg, opening her just enough for him to rub his hard cock against her sex without entering her.

He continued to tease her in this way until his shaft became coated with her wetness. He watched Shesmetet's face while he slowly pushed the tip of his cock inside her pussy. She was beautiful. As he watched her gasp and moan with pleasure, he pushed another inch of his shaft inside her core.

"Why can't I get enough of you, Shesmetet?"

She reached up and cupped his cheek. "Because we were meant to be together."

Cayden felt a rush of feelings wash over him. He wanted to proclaim to the world that this woman was his and that he never wanted to let her go. The thought of her leaving him made his chest ache. He knew a part of him would be missing if she ever left him and didn't return. Somehow, in such a short period of time, Shesmetet had wormed her way inside him.

Holding her tighter, Cayden asked softly, "It's like I'm addicted to you. I can't get enough of your taste, your touch. I feel as if you've always been with me. It's never been like this for me before."

Shesmetet cupped his cheek. "It's the same for me, Cayden. It's the way of mates."

They both moaned when he gave her another inch of his cock. "Is this lust or is it love? It feels a lot stronger than ordinary lust, but how can this be love? We hardly know each other. You can't fall in love with someone you just met."

She placed her hand on his chest over his heart. "What is your heart telling you, Cayden? It knows. Your heart recognized me as your mate when you first saw me in your head when you touched my girdle, just as my heart recognized you. We're

supposed to fall in love at first sight. If not, the connection would never have been made.”

Knowing exactly what Shesmetet meant to him, Cayden pulled back then entered her completely with one thrust. She held onto his shoulder as he pounded into her. He had wanted to take her slowly, but the need to possess her, claim her as his, overrode that. Cayden realized he had been searching for her for most of his adult life. With her in his arms, he felt as if he could take on the world and win. He felt complete, whole. She humbled him. Sheshmetet’s whimpers of need urged him to go faster, harder. He rammed into her over and over again until they both cried out, coming together.

Cayden lowered her leg and gently brushed a kiss across her mouth. Pulling the sheet over them both, he wrapped an arm around Shesmetet’s waist and tucked her head under his chin. His eyes fluttered shut. He would take a little nap, then he would show his mate how much he needed her again and again.

As the first light of dawn broke over the horizon, Shesmetet quietly slipped out of bed. She smiled down at Cayden, who still slept on. Her mate had turned out to be an insatiable lover.

Turning away, Shesmetet softly tiptoed out of the room, still naked. She decided to use the time while Cayden slept to bathe. Not really sure where to find his bathing room, she closed the bedchamber door behind her and walked down the hall to the only other door that stood open. She poked her head inside and smiled when she spotted the large white tub.

The only light came from the single curtained window at the end of the bathing chamber. Not really bothered, since she could see just as well in dim light as in bright, she stepped inside and made her way over to the tub. She frowned when she looked at the spout positioned over the tub and the single knob on the tiled wall above it. Shesmetet took hold of the knob and turned. Nothing happened. She turned it the other way. Still nothing happened.

Not wanting to have to wake Cayden for help, Shesmetet scowled at the knob. She was a goddess, she could figure this out. With a firmer hold, she turned it hard. This time the knob pulled out slightly while she turned it. A trickle of water dripped from the spout and into the tub. Shesmetet pulled harder on the knob and was rewarded with a gush of water. Now that she had the water turned on she had to still figure out how to keep the water from draining away and how to make it warmer. It didn't take her long to accomplish both those things.

While the tub filled, Shesmetet stepped inside and sat down. The warm water lapped around her as the water level rose. The mortal realm had changed so much. The mortals had found ways to make their lives easier since she'd last visited. She realized she had a lot to learn about her mate's world, especially if she wanted to fit into it. A small smile played across her lips. She'd never thought of spending much time in the mortal realm until now. She came when she had been summoned to defeat demons, only to return to the immortal realm once her task was complete.

When her thoughts shifted to demons, she stiffened. All during the night while Cayden had made love to her, she had not once thought about them. She'd now been in the mortal realm for hours. The demons should already have been aware of her presence, but so far they had left her alone, which was something they had never done in the past. They usually would try to use this opportunity to destroy her, to rid themselves of her permanently.

Shesmetet turned off the water now that the tub had filled and leaned back. Maybe the demons no longer had any interest in mortals, though she found that hard to believe. The demons lived to torture and kill mortals for the sport of it.

She closed her eyes and relaxed in the warm bath water. Her eyes snapped open a minute later at the sound of Cayden bellowing her name. "Cayden," she called back. "I'm in here."

Cayden rushed into the bathing chamber and scooped her out of the tub and held her tight. "When I woke up and you weren't in bed I thought you'd left again," he said as he kissed her forehead.

Shesmetet stroked his back. "I told you I would stay. I just thought to bathe while you slept."

He put her down, but didn't let her go. "Why didn't you wake me up? I could have helped you."

"You were tired and needed to sleep." She could see dark circles under Cayden's eyes. "And from the look of you, you need to go back to sleep."

"Don't you? You couldn't have slept long."

"I had all the sleep I needed. A couple hours of sleep are all my body requires each night. Go back to bed, Cayden. I'll return to the bedchamber once I finish my bath."

Cayden shifted her in his arms, cupped her bottom and brought her up against his half-aroused cock. "Why don't I just join you in the bathtub?"

She shook her head, got him to put her down and stepped back into the tub. "Not this time. Another time you can join me in my bath. Right now I want you to sleep. You need that more."

He covered his mouth with his hand and yawned. "You're killing me. Fine, but once I'm caught up on my sleep I want you back in my arms. I like you there."

She was tempted to change her mind, but she held firm to her decision. With her finger pointed to the open door, she said, "Out."

"I'm going, I'm going." Before he left the bathing room, he handed her a bar of soap that sat near the sink and put a towel that he took off a shelf above the counter on it. "Just don't take too long or I'll come back to get you." With that said, Cayden walked out.

Using the soap, Shesmetet pondered what Cayden had said about her killing him. She knew he hadn't meant it literally, but nonetheless it made her think of his mortality.

She would have to change that soon. If they were to be true mates, she wanted an eternity with Cayden. That meant she would have to turn him into an immortal.

Feeling as if her life was now complete with Cayden in it, Shesmetet hurried to finish her bath. Once he woke up again they would have a lot to talk about, first being the eternity they would have together.

Chapter Four

The sound of birds chirping loudly outside his bedroom window brought Cayden awake. Even before he had his eyes fully open, he reached for Shesmetet. He smiled when he saw she lay on her side next to him. "Good morning." He placed a light kiss on her lips.

"Good morning. Did you sleep well?"

Cayden pushed her onto her back and settled between her legs. "Yes. Would you like to continue where we left off in the bathroom?" Before Shesmetet could answer, his stomach growled loudly. He cringed. "Now that was real romantic."

Shesmetet giggled. "Maybe we should wait until after you have eaten."

His stomach protested its emptiness once again. "I guess food is in order. You must be hungry as well." When Shesmetet gave him a sheepish look, Cayden shook his head. "Let me guess, you don't need to eat," he said.

"I'm a goddess, Cayden. I'm not mortal like you."

Cayden grew serious. "Shesmetet, how *is* this going to work between us? Like you said, you're an immortal Egyptian goddess and I'm just a mortal. You'll live forever while I'll grow old and eventually die."

When he would have said something more, Shesmetet placed a finger against his lips. "It doesn't have to be that way," she said softly.

He pulled her finger away. "I don't understand."

"You are my mate, Cayden. If you wish it, I can give you immortality. You wouldn't be a god, but you would still live forever, with me."

Cayden wanted to tell her yes, that he wanted to be with her for an eternity, but then he thought of his family. He was his parents' only child and he had a close

relationship with them. If he became immortal, they would eventually notice he had stopped aging.

He brushed a lock of hair off her forehead. "If I say yes, what about my family? Would I have to keep this a secret?" he asked.

Shesmetet looked at him solemnly. "As a general rule, it is forbidden for mortals to know that we as gods can grant them immortality."

"These are my parents I'm talking about here, Shesmetet. They only had me. I don't have any brothers or sisters to take my place if I up and disappear."

"It wouldn't have to be right away, Cayden."

"But I would have to move away, quit my job and start off fresh somewhere else? Move to wherever you live when you aren't here in the mortal realm?"

She shook her head. "You can't ever live in the immortal realm. It would be forbidden even if you were an immortal. Only the gods can live there."

Cayden sighed and rolled over onto his back next to Shesmetet. "There seems to be a lot of rules when it comes to mortals. To me, it looks as if the gods get to do whatever the hell they want with no rules to follow."

Shesmetet rolled onto her side and propped herself up on her elbow so she could look down at him. "It's not like that. We have rules we must follow as well. If we break them then we must answer to Ra."

"Okay, then what is one of these rules you can't break?"

"The only time a god can give a mortal immortality is if that mortal is their mate. And even then the god must have the mortal's permission. We can't force immortality on our mates if they don't wish it."

Cayden locked gazes with Shesmetet. "So you're telling me that if I said that I didn't want to become an immortal you wouldn't do it, even if it meant you would have to watch me grow old and eventually die?"

"Correct. I may be a goddess but that doesn't mean I have the right to force my will on you."

"Do I have time to think about this? If my parents didn't factor into my decision I would give you a resounding yes right now."

"Of course," she said.

Cayden's stomach growled loudly, reminding him of something else he wanted to ask Shesmetet. "You don't eat. Once I'm immortal will I no longer need to eat as well?"

She chuckled. "No, you'll still need to eat and drink as you do now."

"Well that's good news. I enjoy my food too much." He flipped back the covers and sat up. "I guess I'd better get some food into me before my stomach starts eating itself. I'll hop in a quick shower, first."

Cayden gave Shesmetet a quick, hard kiss before he slipped out of bed. He wanted nothing more than to stay in bed and make love to her all day, but his empty stomach would no longer be ignored. She had also given him a lot to think about. Being offered immortality was something he never would have dreamed would happen to him. Before meeting Shesmetet, Cayden would have laughed off the very idea. Only crazy or delusional people believed in stuff like a goddess offering a mortal the chance to live for eternity. Sweeping her delectable body with his gaze one last time, he sighed wistfully as he forced himself to turn around and walk away.

* * * * *

Once Cayden had showered and gotten something to eat, he joined Shesmetet, who stood in front of his living room window looking outside. She'd put on the same dress she'd worn the night before. Since she stood with her back to him, Cayden let his gaze travel down to her bottom. The dress hugged it to perfection.

Pulling his gaze off her ass, he went to stand next to Shesmetet. The expression of longing that he saw on her face as she stared out at the city street below told Cayden she wouldn't want to stay cooped up in his apartment all day. He put his arm around

her shoulders and kissed the top of her head. "How about we get out of the apartment for a while?"

Shesmetet turned to look up at him. "You want to take me outside?"

He smiled. "I know you want to and I know just the place to go. How would you like to go see the place where I work? The ROM—it's a museum—has a large collection of Egyptian artifacts. There are other things there, as well, that you might find interesting."

She gave him a smile so bright it almost rivaled the sun. "I would love to go to this ROM. Even though it may overwhelm me a bit, this world of yours is so much larger than it was the last time I came to the mortal realm, I want to learn to fit in. Can we leave now?"

Cayden chuckled at her enthusiasm. "Sure, but you'll have to change your clothes first. Not that you don't look good in that dress," he said as he let his gaze skim over her body hungrily.

"What is wrong with it?" Shesmetet asked while she looked down at herself.

"It really isn't the type of dress one would wear when going to a museum."

"Oh. What should I wear then?"

"Uh, maybe something similar to what I have on. Jeans and a t-shirt." Cayden then remembered the stack of flyers he'd left on the floor by the apartment door the day before. He went over and picked up the pile of papers and went back to Shesmetet. He sorted through the flyers until he found one that advertised clothing. "Here," he said as he pointed to a female model who wore a pair of jeans and a pink t-shirt. "Something like this."

Shesmetet stared at the picture, then in a blink of an eye she wore the exact same outfit the woman in the flyer wore, right down to the athletic shoes. "How is this?"

Cayden nodded. "Good, except I forgot to show you what women wear under their t-shirts." He could clearly see the outline of her nipples through the material of her

shirt. He quickly flipped through the flyer until he found the section for bras and panties. Cayden pointed to the bra and panty set a model wore. "Women wear these under their clothes. The bra supports your breasts."

"And the other undergarment? Why do they wear that? I noticed you don't wear any under your jeans."

"I prefer to go commando. The only time I wear underwear is when I have to dress for work."

"So you would prefer that I wear those undergarments like mortal women do?"

"Yes." He leaned in and kissed her lips softly. "Later I'll show you how much of a turn-on it is for a man to get a woman undressed down to her bra and panties."

Shesmetet took the flyer out of his hand and turned her back to him. "In that case, no looking." When she turned back around Cayden could see the outline of a bra through her t-shirt. He reached for the flyer to see if he could guess which one she wore, but Shesmetet held it out of reach. "Oh, no you don't." The flyer then disappeared.

"You do realize now I won't be able to think of anything else but what you have on under your clothes."

"Then it should make the surprise even better."

Cayden had to give her that. The anticipation would make him enjoy getting her out of her clothes even more, if the wait didn't kill him first. "Let's go. The sooner we leave the sooner I can get you back here so I can undress you."

* * * * *

The drive to the ROM proved eventful. Shesmetet had looked at his car with doubt on her face when he had helped her into the passenger seat. When he started the car and pulled out onto the street, her eyes had widened while she painfully clutched his thigh with one hand and pressed her other against the door. Cayden tried to distract her by pointing out landmarks, but that only caused Shesmetet to dig her nails even harder into his leg.

Thankful that he didn't live too far from the museum, Cayden pulled his car into the parking lot and found an empty space to park. Once he turned the engine off he'd had to pry Shesmetet's hand off his thigh so he could get out. When he opened her door, she jumped out of the car so fast she rammed into him. Given her reaction, he had to wonder how he would get her back into it for the trip home.

As they walked hand in hand toward the front entrance to the ROM, Shesmetet slowly started to relax. "Are you okay now?" Cayden asked.

She nodded. "I'm not sure I like to travel that way," she replied.

"I guess I better not take you out on the highway where cars drive even faster. We'll have to work on getting you used to the car at slower speeds first."

She turned and gave him a look of incredulity. "It goes faster?"

Cayden bit back a smile. "Yes, a lot faster than I drove here," he said.

Shesmetet paled slightly. "I don't think I'll ever be able to do that."

Deciding he'd better change the subject before she got too scared to ever set foot inside a car again, Cayden held the door open for her to go inside the museum ahead of him, and said, "Let's go see the Egyptian collection first, since you should be an expert on it."

Cayden took her hand once again as he led her to the section of the museum that housed the ancient Egyptian artifacts out on display. Shesmetet perked up when the first pieces came into view. She flitted from one display to the next, sometimes reading out loud the hieroglyphs carved on pieces of stone in Egyptian. Cayden decided he loved the sexy sound of her voice when she spoke her native language just as much as when she spoke in her accented English. Seeing Shesmetet like this, enjoying their outing, Cayden found there was a lot about her that he loved. He loved the way she moved, the way she almost glided from one display case to another, the way her long black hair shined in the overhead lights. He also enjoyed just being with her. Watching her glitter with enthusiasm with each new relic she saw, he felt his heart melt a little bit more. He couldn't picture his life without her.

Cayden had looked at the Egyptian collection many times with Neil, but with Shesmetet, he saw it in a whole new light. The artifacts were a part of her past life and she had a connection to them. It also brought home how special she really was.

He well and truly loved her. If someone were to have told him a year ago he would meet and fall in love with a goddess he would have been the first person to take them to go get their head examined by a shrink. Cayden was still wavering on becoming an immortal and having to give up his family, he knew if given time, he could probably come to grips with it.

Then there was the whole demon thing. Even though Shesmetet hadn't brought the subject up again, he knew she still worried for his safety. Having had no dealings with demons before, Cayden had no idea what they were capable of. He just hoped the demons continued to keep away from Shesmetet.

Once they had seen every piece in the Egyptian collection, Cayden led Shesmetet to the others. As he watched her, the need to hold her, possess her, built inside him. Each sway of her hips as she walked made him ache to bury his cock inside her. He wanted to make love to her until they both could no longer move. Wanting her, Cayden hurried Shesmetet through one collection to the next. She didn't seem to mind. If anything, she seemed just as eager as he to leave the museum. More than once he caught her glancing down at the crotch of his pants and licking her lips. Each time she'd done it his cock jerked, which made him ache even more.

Rushing her past the last display cases Cayden ushered Shesmetet out the museum's doors. With her hand in his, he had them both at his car in less than a minute. She hesitated briefly when he opened the car door, but he soon fixed that. Cayden pulled her close and kissed her with all the pent-up desire he felt. After he pulled away, they were both breathless.

"The car will make the trip to my apartment go a lot quicker, Shesmetet."

She let her hand drift down the front of his body and stroked the bulge in his pants. She then got into the car. Cayden walked around the back of it and got into the driver's

side. This time the drive didn't seem to bother Shesmetet, mostly because she spent the time fondling his cock through his pants up until they reached his apartment building. By some miracle, he managed to park his car without smashing into anything.

Cayden helped Shesmetet out and led her over to the elevator. By now he sported a noticeable hard-on. As he put the key in the lock to his apartment door, Shesmetet moved from his side and came to stand between him and the door. She wrapped her arms around his waist and rubbed her body up against him. Cayden had to bite the inside of his cheek to stop the loud moan that threatened to break free.

The door finally unlocked, he opened it and walked Shesmetet backward into the apartment. He slammed it behind them and locked it. His keys hit the floor when he reached to pull Shesmetet closer. Cayden took her mouth in a demanding kiss as he ground his erection against her hip. She sucked his tongue into her mouth while she stuck her hands under his t-shirt and caressed his back.

He pushed her up against the wall and ran his hands down her sides. Taking hold of the bottom of her t-shirt, he inched it up. He released her mouth so he could pull it all the way off. Cayden stared down at the sheer white lace bra she wore. With a groan, he bent down and stroked his tongue over each lace-covered nipple until they tightened into buds.

Shesmetet yanked his shirt off and reached to undo the button of his jeans, but Cayden stopped her. If she touched him now, he would either come in his jeans or yank down hers and sink into her. He wanted to take the time to see the panties she wore, to see if they matched her bra. To keep her from touching him, Cayden turned her so she faced away from him. Shesmetet put her hands on the wall in front of her as he reached around and undid the button and zipper of her jeans.

He dragged his tongue along the back of her neck and, taking hold of the waistband of her pants, he gently eased them down past her hips. When they fell to pool at Shesmetet's feet, she kicked them free. Cayden ran his hands down her sides to her bottom. He moaned when his hands encountered bare skin where the back of her

panties should have been. Looking down, he moaned again. Shesmetet wore a white lace thong, the back nothing more than a piece of string. He hadn't known the flyer he'd shown her had thongs in it, but he was glad it had.

Holding her by the hips, Cayden kissed a path down her back to the top of her thong. He went down on his knees and nipped at the twin globes of her ass. Shesmetet moaned when his tongue came out and licked where he had bitten. He pulled her hips away from the wall and positioned her so she was partially bent over with her hands still supporting her. Cayden spread her legs with his hands and ran them up the inside of her thigh. Reaching the apex of her thighs, he yanked her thong aside and ran his tongue along her pussy. Shesmetet's hips bucked as he stiffened his tongue and pushed it inside her core.

He licked and sucked at her pussy while he reached down and undid his jeans. When he shoved them down past his hips, Shesmetet whimpered. Rising up behind her, Cayden took hold of her hips and entered her with one hard thrust. He groaned at the sensation of her wet pussy clamping around his aching cock. Pulling back, he surged inside again. His cock hardened even more as Shesmetet squeezed her inner walls around his shaft. In and out he pumped, Shesmetet pushing back while he surged inside her. As his orgasm built, he reached around to cup her breast through her bra and tugged at her nipple. When Shesmetet's pussy started to spasm around his cock, he pushed into her one final time and exploded deep inside her. Groaning, he held her to him until the last wave of pleasure receded.

Out of breath, Cayden bent and dragged his tongue up her spine. He then cried out when a sharp pain radiating from his back washed through him.

Half-sensing someone standing at his back, he turned his head and found a man who stood behind his left shoulder, his eyes glowing red. He gave Cayden an evil grin as he yanked out a lethal-looking dagger that he'd shoved between Cayden's shoulder blades. Cayden grunted with pain, feeling a warm gush of blood drip down his back.

Suddenly feeling lightheaded, he fell to his knees. The last thing he heard was Shesmetet's cry of anguish, then his world went black.

Chapter Five

Shesmetet willed her clothes back on her body as she spun around to face the demon who stood behind her. At first glance, he looked human, until you saw his glowing red eyes. He stood as tall as Cayden and she could easily see his well-muscled body since all he wore was a white Egyptian-style kilt. He curled his upper lip at her and hissed. The look of hatred he wore was almost a palpable thing between them. She wanted to check Cayden to see how badly he had been wounded but she knew she had to deal with the demon first. Pushing aside the fear she felt over the amount of blood pooling on the floor around Cayden, Shesmetet shifted to her lioness form and launched herself at the demon. Her roars filled the apartment as she attacked him with sharp teeth and claws.

She pushed the demon away from Cayden, one of her paws catching him across the chest. "I'll make you pay for that, bitch," he snarled.

In retaliation, the demon slashed out with his dagger. The sharp blade made a deep gash along her ribs, but Shesmetet barely felt it. The sight of Cayden lying in a pool of his own blood had sealed this demon's fate.

Circling each other, the demon taunted her. "Did you think you could stay here undetected? We sensed your presence here in the mortal realm when you first came to...visit...your mortal. We figured we would let you have your fun with him, think we wouldn't come, before we took him away from you, permanently. Your claws won't be enough to stop me."

Shesmetet knew the demon wanted her to shift back to her human form. Only in her lioness form would she be strong enough to defeat him. She let his taunts roll off her back. She would not let him goad her into doing something stupid. Cayden's life was at stake, she couldn't afford to make any mistakes.

She took a swipe at the demon's legs, but he quickly jumped out of reach. "It has been too long since you have fought one of my kind," he said with a sneer. "You are out of practice. I will be no easy kill. And while you try to defeat me, your lover's lifeblood will slowly drain out of him. I can already hear his heart struggling to beat."

With a roar of rage, she launched herself at the demon. While they fought, Shesmetet used her pain and anger to bring the demon down. She tried to sink her teeth into his throat to rip it out, but he brought his fist down on top of her head, making her briefly see stars before her eyes. Not to be put off, she sank her claws deeper into him, shredding his skin, weakening him. When he finally lay battered and bleeding on the floor, she shifted back to human form and used his own dagger to slit his throat. She then recited the spell that would send him back to the underworld as a message to the other demons so they would know what their fate would be if they, too, thought to attack her mate.

The battle over, Shesmetet no longer felt the wound in her side as it started to heal. Hurriedly, she made her way back to Cayden. Dropping to her knees she rolled him to his side. The wound in his back continued to bleed. Seeing the amount of blood already on the floor and the paleness of Cayden's face, she knew the demon's blade had to have nicked his heart or a major artery. She also knew if she didn't give him immortality now he would bleed to death in a matter of minutes.

Gently, Shesmetet rolled Cayden over so he lay across her lap while she supported his head in the crook of her arm. Even though he groaned when she moved him, his eyes remained closed. She had to wake him up. He had to consent to what she was about to do.

"Cayden, wake up." His eyes moved back and forth beneath his eyelids, but they didn't open. Shesmetet shook him as she tapped his cheek. "You must wake up." This time his eyes fluttered open.

"Shesmetet?" he asked weakly.

"You have to listen to me closely, Cayden. I must turn you into an immortal or you will die. You have to give me your consent."

Cayden lifted his hand and touched her cheek. "I...I love you." His eyes then rolled back up into his head and his hand went limp.

Shesmetet cried out his name while she shook him. "Cayden!"

When he didn't rouse, she placed two fingers at the side of his neck. His pulse felt weak. She knew she didn't have much time left. She didn't want to lose him. They were mates, destined to be together forever. She wanted that forever with Cayden.

With her hand pressed to his pale cheek, Shesmetet gathered her powers and sent a surge of energy through her hand into Cayden. There should have been a ribbon of energy coming from her, sinking into him, but no connection formed. She shook her head in denial, tears filling her eyes when Cayden remained mortal. This couldn't be happening. Not understanding why her powers failed her now when she needed them the most, Shesmetet tried again and again to make Cayden immortal.

Every attempt failed.

Wiping the tears from her eyes, she took a deep breath and prepared to do what no god or goddess could do without bringing down the wrath of Ra on them. Shesmetet placed her hand on Cayden's chest over his heart and closed her eyes, focusing deep inside her to her soul. Gathering a small piece of her soul, she sent it along with her powers into Cayden. He gasped as her powers surged through him, permeating every cell in his body. Shesmetet sent her powers deeper until they brushed up against Cayden's soul and, grabbing hold of it, she wrapped the piece of her soul around his until they melded into one.

She blinked open her eyes to find Cayden staring up at her. He no longer looked pale. She got him to sit up so she could run her hand over his wound, which had stopped bleeding and had already started to heal.

Cayden looked at her with a confused expression on his face. "I feel different. The pain is gone, but I don't feel the same."

Shesmetet gave him a watery smile. "I did what needed to be done to save you." She sucked in a breath, feeling herself being pulled to the immortal realm.

His brows drew together. "Shesmetet? What's wrong?"

She tried to fight the pull, but she knew it would be a losing battle. The one who summoned her would not allow her to ignore him for long. She pressed a hard kiss to Cayden's lips. "Whatever happens, always remember I love you."

Cayden reached for her just as she was yanked out of the mortal realm and into the immortal one.

* * * * *

She was gone. Cayden had no idea how long he sat on the floor hoping Shesmetet would return. Minutes then hours went by, but she didn't come back. As darkness fell, Cayden slowly pulled himself together and looked around his apartment. Even though the sun had long set, he found he could see just as well in the dark as he could in the light. His sense of smell had increased too. He now could easily separate individual scents that lingered in the air—the metallic smell of blood, the smell of the food he had cooked that morning. He breathed deeper as he pulled one out of the many. He savored it, wanting to have it imprinted on him so he would never forget it—Shesmetet's scent.

Slowly, Cayden pulled himself up on his feet. He stared down at the large pool of his blood on the floor. The wound he'd received hadn't been a minor one. He realized he was lucky to be alive, considering he should have been dead from that amount of blood loss. Cayden stiffened. There could only be one reason why he had survived—Shesmetet must have given him immortality. It explained why he felt so different. He vaguely remembered her shouting at him to wake up, that she needed his consent. Obviously she must have taken matters into her own hands, which pleased him since that had been what he wanted. If he had been able to tell her he would have quickly given his consent.

Cayden sighed. He had no idea where Shesmetet had gone, but he had a feeling she had gone back to the immortal realm. Even though he had been close to death, he had known Shesmetet had defeated the demon that had attacked them. So it couldn't have been because of the demon she had left him. He hoped she would return to him, but he suspected she wouldn't. The thought of her never coming back to him, him having to live for eternity without her at his side, made Cayden ache to have her in his arms again.

With his hands on his hips, he looked down at the blood at his feet and then at the other pool of blood in his living room. He needed to clean up the mess. Knowing if Shesmetet had been here she probably would have had the blood gone in a blink of an eye Cayden waved his hand at the pool at his feet. He had to do a double take when it seemingly disappeared.

He knelt down and touched the floor with his fingers. It was if the blood had never been there. "Holy shit. Did I do that?"

Cayden moved over to the second pool of blood in the living room. He looked down at it and waved his hand as he thought of it no longer being there. Sure enough, the blood disappeared. He slowly backed up until the back of his legs hit the couch, then slumped down on it. *What the hell is going on?*

* * * * *

Shesmetet didn't return that night, or the next day. Cayden missed her so much he almost physically ached with it. He had no idea why she'd left in the first place, but considering she had told him she loved him before she had disappeared, he couldn't help but think she had been taken against her will. Why and who would have taken her, he had no idea. All he knew is that he wanted her back. It felt as if a piece of him had been ripped out of him and that he wouldn't feel complete again until he held her in his arms.

He'd also spent the day after her disappearance coming to grips with his new self. Not only could he will things away with a thought, he also found he no longer needed to eat or drink. He had tried to eat something that first night, but had ended up running to the toilet as his body brought it back up again. The same thing had happened when he'd tried to drink water. His sleep patterns had changed as well. After a couple hours of deep sleep, he awoke refreshed as if he'd slept eight or nine hours. No matter how hard he tried to go back to sleep he couldn't.

All the changes in him also made him think. Shesmetet had told him when she gifted him with immortality he would still have the same needs every mortal did only he would now live forever, which hadn't happened. She had also said she couldn't give him godhood, but Cayden had to question whether she had. The needs of his body were too similar to Shesmetet's own.

Not ready to face the world, Cayden called in sick on Monday morning. He knew he couldn't tell anyone what had happened. For one thing they would think he had lost it. And if he were to give them the proof that he wasn't crazy, they would lock him up and experiment on him until they figured out why he could do the things he could. Not something he wanted. He knew he would eventually have to return to work—given long enough, Neil would come knocking to see what was wrong—but Cayden decided he deserved a couple of days to sort things out.

With not much else to do, Cayden spent the day watching television. After he got bored with that, he turned it off and decided to take a shower. While he stood under the running water, he thought of Shesmetet. He had no idea what he would do if she never returned. Did he want to live forever without her at his side? Not really. The idea of an eternity without her seemed pretty bleak.

When the shower curtain snapped open, Cayden stiffened prepared to fight off another attack. The sight of Shesmetet in his bathroom with a smile on her face just about sent him reeling. Cayden grabbed her around the waist and pulled her into the shower with him. His lips came down on hers just as the sheath dress she wore

disappeared. He threaded his fingers through her hair and slanted his mouth over hers. With a growl of need, he backed her up against the shower's tiled wall. Her hands gripped his shoulders when he lifted her leg and put it around his waist.

He lifted his head as he rubbed his cock against her pussy. "I need to be inside you, Shesmetet. Now."

Shesmetet arched against him. "I'm more than ready for you," she said on a moan.

As he pushed his cock inside her pussy he found her wet and ready as she had said. Cayden took her hard and fast against the wall with the warm water from the shower pounding on them. The sounds of their moans filled the bathroom as they came together.

Cayden let Shesmetet slowly slide down his body to stand on her feet. He cupped her face and gently kissed her lips. "What happened to you? Where did you go?"

"Ra called me before him."

"Why?"

"To answer for what I had done."

Cayden locked gazes with her. "For what you did to me. You didn't just make me an immortal, did you, Shesmetet?"

She shook her head. "I didn't want to lose you. So I did the only thing that would save you. I gave you a piece of my soul as well as immortality. I made you a god, Cayden."

"What did Ra do?"

Shesmetet smiled. "He banished me. I no longer can return to the immortal realm."

Cayden pulled her close. "I'm sorry, Shesmetet. But what about the demons? It was a demon who attacked me, right?"

She nodded then held herself back so she could look at him. "There's nothing to be sorry about. You are my mate and I want to be where you are. Being banished to the mortal realm with you is no punishment. And we don't have to worry about the

demons anymore. Ra made it so they would no longer be able to sense my presence since I can no longer be called on to protect mortals from them. We can be together.” She brushed a kiss across his lips. “I love you, Cayden.”

“I love you, Shesmetet. Forever.”

As Cayden took Shesmetet’s lips in a languid kiss, he vowed he would show her every day that she was one gift he would cherish for eternity.

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.

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