

Changeling Press LLC

www.changelingpress.com

Copyright © 2009 by Marteeka Karland

First published in 2009, 2009

NOTICE: This eBook is licensed to the original purchaser only. Duplication or distribution to any person via email, floppy disk, network, print out, or any other means is a violation of International copyright law and subjects the violator to severe fines and/or imprisonment. This notice overrides the Adobe Reader permissions which are erroneous. This eBook cannot be legally lent or given to others.

This eBook is displayed using 100% recycled electrons.

Darkling Lust

Marteeka Karland

All rights reserved.

Copyright (C) 2010 Marteeka Karland

ISBN: 978-1-60521-412-2

Formats Available:

HTML, Adobe PDF, EPub

MobiPocket, Microsoft Reader

Publisher:

Changeling Press LLC

PO Box 1046

Martinsburg, WV 25402-1046

■ChangelingPress.com

Editor: Katriena Knights

Cover Artist: Marteeka Karland

Adult Sexual Content

This e-book file contains sexually explicit scenes and adult language hich some may find offensive and hich is not appropriat e for a young audience.

Changeling Press E-Books are for sale to adults, only, as defeône by the law of the country in hich you made your purchase. Please store your files isely, there they cannot be accessne by under-aged readers.

Legal File Usage—Your Rights

Payment of the domload fee for this book grants the purchaser the right to domload and read this file, and to maintain private backup copies of the file for the purchaser's personal use ONLY.

The unauthorized reproduction or distribution of this or any copyrighted ork is illegal. Authors are paid on a per-purchase basis. Any use of this file beyond the rights stated above constitutes theft of the author's earnings. File sharing is an international crime, prosecutne by the Unitne States Department of Justice and the Unitne States Border Patrol, Division of Cyber Crimes, in partnership ith Interpol. Criminal copyright infringement, including infringement ithout monetary gain, is punishable by seizure of computnrs, up to five years in federal prison and a fine of \$250,000 per reportne instance.

[Back to Table of Contents]

Darkling Lust

Marteeka Karland

Darklings aren't the things that go bump in the night, but for one roman and one Darkling, keeping the dark things at bay is second only to their passion for each other.

A Darkling is a creature charged with protecting humanity from things that go bump in the night. His reward is one human woman to call his own.

Mary first learns about Darklings and all they do then she reads a book that clearly states, "Don't read this!" When she does, and the reality of that she's unleashed upon herself hits her, she snaps it shut. But it's too late. Her Darkling comes for her, and she has to learn to accept him before the very creatures he has protected humans from during his long time as a Darkling destroy her.

[Back to Table of Contents]

Chapter One

Mary awoke with a shiver, cold beyond imagining. She needed to open her eyes but they were heavy, and her body was sluggish to respond to her commands. With great effort, she managed to shake her head and concentrate on the cold surrounding her. When she finally got her eyes opened, she wished she could close them again and forget the sight she saw.

Her head lolled backward so the view was disorienting. When she turned her head to

She wasn't laughing now.

With a start she realized that not only was she being taken prisoner by a monster, but she was also naked. Cold mist from the cloud cover bit into her flesh like a million pinpricks, and she cried out in both pain and fear.

Only a few moments longer, my love. We'll be home soon.

The words were whispered directly into her mind and as gentle as a caress, yet she shivered. This sounded exactly like what the book had warned about. She'd been claimed by a Darkling. The likelihood that she'd ever be able to return to her old life was remote. She could almost feel everything she'd ever known slipping away. What awaited her was uncertain, but if the writings had been correct, the Darkling would never allow her to leave.

True to his word, it wasn't long before he landed them gently in the courtyard of a gothic villa. He held her fast, though, not letting her pull away from him. His skin was a leathery dark green, and his features were harsh and angular. No one could say he was handsome, but he treated her gently enough. Muscles bulged beneath unearthly skin, and Mary marveled at the power of his body. His nails dug into her flesh, but not painfully so. He seemed to examine her just as she did him.

"You'll learn to love me in time, Mary. You'll also learn to speak to me when I'm not with you."

"Why me? What if I want to go home?"

"You can never go home. I've claimed you. I'll never let you go."

Mary didn't know what to say. She knew she should be frightened, but for some reason there was no fear. Instead, she found she was oddly curious. The Darkling was a magnificent creature. Leathery wings that matched his body color and texture rose magnificently from his back and shoulders. He stood before her proudly. Muscles flexed and bunched beneath his skin making her itch to reach out and touch him, but she wasn't altogether suM9'exell kngetand

toume, Ito

made her angry. "Perhaps you should consider that when reading my thoughts without my permission."

He blinked several times and took a step back before throwing his head back and laughing a great belly laugh. "You are really special, my Mary. Truly God, in his infinite wisdom, chose well when he chose you for me."

Mary couldn't help but smile. His gentle manner belied his frightening appearance, and she was struck for the first time by his smile. It lessened the harsh angles of his face somewhat and made him more approachable. For a while she simply looked him over. Powerful arms and a wide, defined chest and abs tapered down to a trim waist. The thick columns of his legs were spread wide and morphed into the hoofs of a horse. His tail curled around her leg almost unconsciously, as if he had to touch her, had to keep her close.

But that wasn't all she noticed. The cock dangling between his legs was as impressive as the rest of him. Long, thick, and veiny, it began to rise before her eyes. When she raised her eyes to his face, he lifted his chin proudly.

"You're a beautiful woman, my Mary. I make no apologies for my body's response to you. At this moment, I want nothing more than to take my reward."

"I don't want your apology. I only want your name."

His eyes shifted to one side and he looked decidedly uncomfortable. This was unexpected.

"It's only your name. Surely I haven't already asked too much of you. Should I have waited until... you know... after?" This was absurd. Given the size of the erection he sported

with no apology, he couldn't possibly be uncomfortable about something so small as a name.

"No! No. You're perfectly within your right to ask. It's just, I'm not certain you realized what you did when you named me."

"Huh?" Mary was more confused than she thought she could possibly be in this situation. "I haven't named you. What are you talking about? Just tell me your name!"

"George."

"George?"

"George."

Then it dawned on Mary and her mouth fell open. Then it was her turn to laugh. One random thought and the poor man had been named George.

"Oh, my! I'm so sorry. I'm so sorry!"

"Just remember what you promised."

"Yes. I won't forget." She giggled a little. "I'll love you and squeeze you and pet you..."

"... and fuck me..."

"And call you —"

Before she could finish, he pounced on her. He scooped her up and fused his mouth to hers.

His kisses were heady. Mary had been kissed before, certainly, but there was something different about this man and his hold on her. It was special, going beyond anything she'd ever experienced. He knew just how she liked it, just what turned her on, just what drove her wild.

His tongue danced inside her mouth, dueling with her tongue. She sucked at it and whimpered. If he'd done nothing

else, Mary was certain he could give her pleasure beyond anything she'd ever imagined. Already her skin tingled and her pussy creamed.

His strong arms held her close and his wings wrapped around her, effectively closing out any prying eyes. It was as if he was acutely aware of her nakedness and had no desire to share her with anyone. For that, Mary was exceedingly grateful. The villa looked deserted, but being outside with no clothing was uncomfortable for her. Thankfully, he either understood or was as uneasy as she was.

At her first whimper, he pulled his mouth away from hers and moved down her neck. When she felt the little sting, Mary cried out and knew she'd been marked but couldn't find it in her to care. If he wanted to mark her as his, that was fine. It seemed appropriate somehow. Mary didn't know why she accepted him so easily, but she couldn't find a shred of modesty in her where his touch was concerned. She only wanted more. Lots more.

Finding her mouth again, he scooped her up into his arms and carried her inside. Normally, she'd want to look around and at least see where she was going, but the things he was doing with his mouth made coherent thought almost impossible.

He wound his way through the structure, upstairs, through doors, and finally to a room with a very big bed. The bed was all that mattered at the moment to Mary. He laid her gently in the middle before covering her body with his.

Mary gripped his shoulders and back, needing him closer, but he didn't stay long. The Darkling slid down her body,

kissing her flesh as he went, to settle between her legs. His head was slick and hairless, but Mary managed to pull him to her sex anyway. When his tongue swiped through her pussy, she thought she'd died and gone to heaven.

The things he was doing to her were probably illegal in most states. It felt too good not to be a sin on some level. It seemed like he knew exactly what she liked as well as what she needed even if she didn't. The pleasure was unbelievable.

"You are. But God gives everyone choices. I had a choice to do this or be human. You have a choice to come to me or go back to your world."

Mary's eyelids drooped and she had a really hard time keeping them open. Especially when her Darkling crawled up beside her and tucked her against his body. "Do I have to decide now?"

"No. But you'll return here every night until you do."

She wanted to ask what he meant, but sleep overtook her as she snuggled more securely into his body. The last thing she heard from him was, "If it's not too much trouble, can you find me a new name? George just doesn't seem to fit..."

That's when the persistent buzz of her alarm clock penetrated her fuzzy head and she opened her eyes to find herself in her own bed.

Damn.

She needed to get out more.

Or not.

Mary slapped the clock off and swung her legs over the side. It felt like she hadn't slept at all. She tried to remember what she could have eaten to give her such vivid dreams. Nothing spicy and no alcohol. But dayum! Whatever it was, she was never eating it again.

She stumbled into the bathroom and splashed water on her face before fishing out her toothbrush. That's when she got a look at her reflection in the mirror. There, on the right side of her neck, just above her collarbone, was a small, reddish bruise. The love bite given by her Darkling.

Her knees went weak as she stared at the little love mark. She'd like to explain it by saying her boyfriend probably did it except she didn't have a boyfriend.

This was so outside her comfort zone it wasn't even funny. It looked like she was going to have to choose between her comfortable life and life with the mythical Darkling.

[Back to Table of Contents]

Chapter Two

Despite apparently being sound asleep in her own bed, Mary was exhausted. It definitely felt like she had been up all night.

"I told you those late nights would catch up to you eventually," her best friend and coworker, Diana, whispered from her cubicle. "You're practically asleep at your terminal."

"I swear, I went to bed early last night. Maybe I'm so used to being up until midnight that I can't handle the extra three or four hours." Mary wanted to tell her friend about her dream, but she didn't dare. Best friend or not, the last time she'd mentioned Darklings to Diana, the woman had refused to listen to her, saying it was so much nonsense. Fantastical foolery, she'd called it. Mary wasn't so sure. Especially now.

"Well, whatever you did, don't do it again. Can you at least blame it on alcohol?"

"Unfortunately, no. Not even a Captain and cola. I just had... crazy dreams. That's all. Probably just had a funky REM cycle or something."

"Must have been some dream."

The women went back to work. That was the thing about working in a "factory." Talking was a distraction and anything that took attention away from the computer was frowned upon.

Mary's fingers flew over her keyboard, entering data as quickly and accurately as she could. It lasted only a few minutes before her eyes got heavy. She felt like someone had

thrown sand in her eyes. The letters and numbers on the screen blurred, and she knew it was hopeless. There was no way she could finish out the day. She'd only been there two hours. Sitting like this, struggling to key in even one page of text for eight more hours was going be torture.

Mary kept thinking about the night before. Had it been a dream? It had been so real, and there was no denying the love bite on her neck. Thank goodness for the cool weather. She'd worn a turtleneck shirt to cover it up, but it still throbbed unnaturally.

She went to her car during her break to loomcather.

He scooped Mary up and took off. Mary had the briefest moment to wonder if anyone had seen them before she realized this Darkling meant business. She watched the ground falling away from her. It felt like she was back in her dream, only the feeling she got when she looked at this creature was anything but serene. She felt danger. Death after a prolonged agony.

Terror seized her. Blind, all-consuming terror. With a blood-curdling scream, Mary fought the Darkling. He had tucked her tight against his body and she used her closeness to her advantage, kicking and punching. She bit his chest as she pounded his side just beneath his rib cage with her fist as hard as she could. It took only moments for one of her kicks to connect with his groin, and he screeched in agony.

And she was free, only to fall.

They had climbed to a dizzying height, and Mary knew it would be several seconds before she hit the ground. She knew she was falling to her death, but she didn't scream. Instead, a peace fell over her like a gentle waterfall on a hot summer day. It was soothing and calming, a relaxing balm to a hot and miserable time. Wind slammed into her with ferocious intensity, yet she wasn't distressed.

Drykin. His name was Drykin.

Mary smiled even as she fell. She might not live to see her Darkling again, but at least she'd give him a proper name, a name befitting his magnificence. She only hoped he would forgive her for doubting him and for not believing in her heart. She'd known from the moment she'd closed that book what her destiny had been, yet she let her fear and doubt

cloud her judgment. Perhaps God would give him a second chance where she had failed him.

"I'm so sorry, Drykin," she whispered. "Please forgive me."

It was funny. Mary always figured if she knew she was about to die, she'd be a lot more scared. All she felt was peace. Smiling, she closed her eyes and waited for death.

A gentle chuckle caressed her mind then. You should know better than to think I'd let you die, or let anyone take you from me. I'd never have let you return to your world had I not had every confidence I could claim you again if you were in danger.

Mary turned her head just as Drykin closed his arms around her, slowing her fall until they hovered several feet above the ground. The wind no longer pounded her ears, and the sun warmed any chill she might have had. Looking into the silver blue eyes of her Darkling gave her joy. This was where she was meant to be. She knew it without a doubt. There was nothing to hold her to this life. She had no family, no pets. Only her friend, Diana, would miss her should she leave.

"Take me home," she breathed and caressed Drykin's cheek.

"Home?" He raised an eyebrow.

"Our home." Mary smiled as she said it, somehow knowing it would ease the ache she knew was in his heart. She could see his pain clearly in his eyes. Only now did she realize the pain he'd endured in letting her return home.

"I had to know you wanted to be with me, my Mary. By the law we Darklings live by, you were mine by rights, but I

wanted you to want me. Once I had you in my arms, I knew I could never bring you sorrow, no matter the cost to myself."

"Did you know that Darkling would come after me?"

Drykin smiled and started them on an upward climb into a cloudbank before moving them through the sky. "He was not a Darkling, and yes, I knew he or another like him would try to take you if you stayed long enough. I underestimated how quickly my scent on you would catch the attention of the other supernatural creatures in the area. For that, I apologize."

"He meant to kill me. After a while. It's obvious he could have come for me any time he wanted. Why did he wait until now?"

"Because he didn't want you only for a kill. It's a long story, but he was a Drakonion. They feed on the flesh of humans, but they get more sustenance from psychic energy. If he'd kept you and fed from your fear and pain, he could have lasted a very long time before he had to seek out another human, thus protecting himself from Darkling hunters. Fortunately, a human's psychic energy can't be tapped unless they have been claimed and mated by a Darkling. You wouldn't have suited his needs, but he wouldn't have known that until he tried channeling it. You have been claimed by me, but not mated."

Mary shivered and buried her face in Drykin's neck. He hugged her tighter to his chest. "Soon, my love," he whispered. "We'll soon be home and no others will ever be able to touch you there."

She didn't doubt him. She could feel the sincerity and confidence in his own abilities within him. Mary knew she needed to ask him about that, but she couldn't right now. It was far from warm, but it felt good to be held so snugly, and she was very tired. The adrenaline rush had left her, and she was in worse shape than she'd been in before all the excitement.

Chapter Three

You're mine, Mary. You're safe with me. I hope you know that. Regardless of my earlier statements, I can never let you go back. The danger is too great. If you can't accept me, I'll respect your wishes, but I will always do what is necessary to keep you safe.

She floated gently in a sea of darkness. She could see nothing, but Mary wasn't scared. The warmth and security she felt when she was in Drykin's presence surrounded her and filled her. But this time, there was something else.

Mary knew she was picking up random thoughts and feelings from her Darkling, but this... Filling him was a lust so strong, it bordered on insanity. For her. All for her.

Only in her dreams had she ever thought to affect a man that way, but she knew without a doubt that anything this man felt was solely for her. It wasn't lust in general, or lust for anyone other than her. Drykin was focused completely on her.

It thrilled and flattered her that he needed her that badly, and Mary knew she'd embrace him and his lust. She'd welcome any attention he wanted to give her and her body. The feeling of awe and love and lust was almost overpowering. It was as if he couldn't believe she was his. The thought came to her, faintly, that he knew he could never have made a more perfect woman if he'd sculpted her himself.

Mary tried to shake off the thoughts and feelings as those of a dream, because that's the way she'd always wanted her man to feel about her. She wanted a man who would worship her, a man she could worship as well. She wanted him to love and need her as much as she did him.

So, was it a dream?

No, my love. You were made for me. Everything about you will be exactly what I want and need. You are my match in every way, physically, mentally, and sexually. You're my reward for millennia of hard work. That you accept me and welcome my thoughts and feelings is a testament to our compatibility.

The book said the mate of a Darkling wouldn't find the situation alien or unnatural. Mary smiled and stretched her body, struggling to open her eyes. Are you with me? I can't find you.

"I'll always be with you, my Mary."

She opened her eyes and found herself still fully clothed, save her socks and shoes, snuggled next to Drykin in a huge, soft bed. She turned in his arms and caressed his face. She loved the harsh angles of his face. They made him look masculine in a way most men never could. There was nothing remotely feminine about him, yet he touched her so softly. So gently.

"I don't want to go back. I want to be with you. I don't know why it doesn't bother me to leave everything I've known behind, but I know it means a life without you and I'm not willing to do that."

"You know next to nothing about me, my Mary. Are you sure this is what you want?"

"I am." She smiled. "I've even found your name. Not that silly name I thought of when I didn't think Darklings were anything other than imagination. I have a name perfect for you."

He raised an eyebrow. "And that is?"

"Drykin," she said, raising an eyebrow. "It seemed like an appropriately fearsome and sexy name. Given the fact the Drakonion didn't follow us, I think you've earned the former. Now why don't you prove you deserve the latter?"

Drykin rolled on top of Mary and seemed to ponder the name she'd given him. "As you wish, my lovely Mary. It is, indeed, a good name."

He took her lips gently, not ravenously as she'd expected. Mary knew he wanted to take her roughly. She could almost feel the savage need within him by the look in his eyes. Mary knew he would eventually and anticipation of it was a heady aphrodisiac.

Drykin kissed her now as if she were a precious thing to him. He kissed her as a man might kiss a woman he loved with all his heart, a woman he thought never to see again. It was as if he believed God, in his infinite mercy, found him worthy to return her back into his arms.

His lips were soft but slightly demanding. Drykin nibbled and lapped at her lips and tongue, coaxing rather than taking. He had to know she didn't need to be wooed, she was his for the taking, but he seemed to flirt with the kiss, retreating and

advancing to keep her off guard. When Mary groaned and tilted her pelvis, Drykin went in for the kill, so to speak.

Plunging his tongue into Mary's mouth, Drykin echoed her groan with his own masculine one. He wrapped his arms securely around her and tangled his fingers in her hair, positioning her head to maximize both their pleasure. Over and over he licked at her mouth and sucked her lips. Drykin's kiss of seduction turned into one meant to claim. And Mary was more than willing to let him.

After what seemed like forever, yet not nearly long enough, Drykin pulled away from her. "I want you, Mary. Here. Now. In my bed. If you have any doubts, if you aren't sure you can live here with me forever, tell me now and we'll stop. Once I've taken you as my mate, I will never let you go. No matter what you want."

"I'm only twenty-six, Drykin. I can't wrap my head around 'forever.' But I can assure you of this. I don't want to be without you. I can't promise I won't miss my friend, but I've got nothing else for me anywhere but here."

He smiled warmly at her. "That's an honest answer. It's all I can expect."

"Then shut up and make love to me. Make me want to stay here with you."

Drykin unfastened her jeans and slid them down her hips along with her panties. Mary thought about letting him undress her completely but decided all she was doing was prolonging her own misery. She shimmied out of her shirt, but before she could get to her bra, Drykon sliced the front of it open with one sharp talon. He didn't give her enough time to shrug out of it. Which was fine with her.

Instead of plunging into her like she wanted and expected, he shoved her legs apart and pulled them over his shoulders. Mary knew what he was going to do, but at the first touch of his tongue on her pussy she screamed in the most tremendous pleasure she could ever remember.

"That's it, my Mary," Drykin purred from between her legs.
"Tell me what you want."

Mary's vision narrowed to the Darkling between her legs. She wasn't sure how she managed to find her voice, but she did. It might have been husky with need, but she managed to get the words out. "You, Drykin. I want you."

He latched on to her clit this time and sucked gently, alternately making a swipe through her cunt lips. Several times, he did this, always coming back to her clit. Every time she got close to coming, Drykin pulled back and started all over again. His animalistic growls and grunts fueled her own lust, and she shrieked and pulled at his head and horns.

The horns were a definite plus at the moment. They gave her something solid to grab on to and pull him up her body. He chuckled and nipped her body in various places on the way up, lingering on one breast for a few seconds.

"My little human is impatient. Do you know how dangerous I am, my Mary? Are you not impressed with my ability to slay the dark creatures haunting the night?"

"Of course I am. But right now, you need to be worried about me and what I'll do if you don't deliver on the pleasure you're dangling in front of me. Things that go bump in the night aren't nearly as frightening as a woman left wanting, my Drykin." She grinned, deliberately using his name as possessively as he'd used hers.

"I love a woman who knows what she wants," he muttered before swiping his cock through her pussy once, then sliding home.

Mary wanted to squeeze her eyes shut and savor the moment, but she couldn't. She couldn't take her eyes off Drykin. She couldn't look away from the look of pure bliss on

his face, and she knew that her own face mirrored it. She braced her feet on his calves and met each slow thrust with her own. He felt so good inside her; it was nothing short of magical.

They moved fluidly. As one. Mary groaned and wrapped her arms around his neck, and buried her face in his shoulder. Tentatively, she licked his collarbone. She couldn't help it. He tasted slightly salty with sweat, but also wild and otherworldly. There was nothing ordinary about him. Nothing like any man she'd ever known. Drykin was everything she'd ever wanted in a man.

His dark skin gleamed in the light, and his muscles rippled around her as he plunged into her over and over. His grunts and groans echoed her own squeals of pleasure, and he clung to her as much as she clung to him.

"Yes, my Mary. Can you feel how much I want you? Do you know how good it feels inside you?"

"Oh, Drykin! I do! I can! Please don't stop! Faster! Harder!"

At her command, Drykin fucked her in earnest. Their flesh slapped against each other in a sharp staccato. The sounds filled the air along with their screams and cries. Mary arched up to meet every thrust with one of her own, and Drykin slammed into her with an almost painful force. Mary loved every moment of it. This was how sex was supposed to be. All-consuming. So pleasurable she never wanted it to end.

"Now, my Mary," Drykin croaked. "Come for me. Come for me now!"

And just that easily, she did. Her orgasm seized her so powerfully and suddenly, all she could do was lay there on her back and ride it out. Her cunt spasmed around Drykin's dick in ever-strengthening pulses until she felt him spill his seed inside her. With a tremendous roar, Drykin threw his head back and howled his completion. Veins stood out on his neck and shoulders as he strained during his release.

Heeizedla.ktiful to her.

After a while, the contractions ceased and they both collapsed. Drykin rolled them so they lay on their sides. He kissed her quickly before retrieving a damp cloth and cleansing her and himself. With a groan, he climbed back into bed beside her and pulled her securely to him.

"Sleep, my Mary. Tomorrow, we'll start your new life."

Mary knew she should ask questions, but it really didn't
matter. Sheeizedhere. And sheeizen't leaving Drykin's side.

[Back to Table of Contents]

Chapter Four

There were no dreams. When Mary awoke, she felt more refreshed than she could ever remember. This time, she didn't even question if recent events were real or fantasy. She knew. She'd always known. For the first time in her adult life, she felt like she knew her destiny and she reveled in it.

Hopping out of bed, Mary looked around her new home. The bed was huge and plush, the carpet soft and springy. There was a cushioned window seat overlooking a majestic mountain lake. The sun sank low just above the mountaintop and the sky was blazoned with red and orange. Mary gasped and marveled at the beauty of it. It was so beautiful, it made her heart ache and tears formed in her eyes.

"Are you ready, my Mary?"

Drykin's voice was deep and warm. She turned to him with a smile and took his outstretched hand. He was truly a magnificent man.

"It's so beautiful, Drykin." She glanced back over her shoulder at the splendor below them.

He smiled. "I know. I positioned the house for just that view from this window. I hope it pleases you."

"You built the house specifically for this view?" He was a romantic. Who'd have guessed? "Well, you definitely have good taste." She fell into step with him as he led her out of the bedroom. "Where are we going?"

"To the lake. I have everything prepared. It should be comfortable even in the chilly evening air."

"Comfortable for what?" She was more curious than anything. Whatever he had planned was bound to be lifechanging, but then, she'd already given up her old life. She knew Drykin wouldn't do anything to harm her. Whatever happened next didn't really matter as long as he was at her side.

He didn't look at her, but he smiled. "I'll always be with you, my Mary. The small ceremony we perform now will bind us together in the eyes of the One God." He did look at her then. "But as far as I'm concerned, when you gave yourself to me so freely and passionately this morning, we were already bound."

Mary returned his smile and squeezed his hand. "Just promise me it won't hurt too much."

Drykin chuckled. "Only if you ask for a spanking, my Mary. This is about affirming our affection and growing love for one another. If you prefer a little rough loving, then that's what you'll get. However, should you prefer it gentle, I'll be more than happy to restrain myself."

"Oh, you!" Mary laughed and gouged Drykin in the ribs. He flinched and gave a sharp yelp, but laughed and didn't let go of her hand. It struck Mary that she'd never been so totally at ease like this with another person since the death of her parents a couple of years back. Now—finally—she understood why her mother gave up the battle with cancer she'd fought for five years when her father had been killed in the automobile crash. They had shared a similar camaraderie with each other for more than thirty years. She'd have been lost, too.

It hit her so profoundly that she didn't realize she'd stopped walking. Drykin didn't pull her along—instead, he stopped with her. He didn't seem in a rush to get to their destination; he just let her do what she needed to do. Right now, she was discovering how much he really meant to her. Mary could feel the gamut of emotions coursing through Drykin, all of them positive, and she knew without a doubt he loved her too.

"Did you really expect anything else?" His question was spoken softly as he smiled at her. "You're everything I asked for in a woman and more. I had no choice but to love you. The moment you opened that book, I was yours."

Mary threw her arms around Drykin's neck. He laughed happily and hugged her back. "You're an amazing woman, my Mary. I'm blessed to have this time with you."

"I'm here as long as you want me. You've managed to get under my skin in a very short period of time. I'm already not willing to imagine my life without you. I don't want to. And I don't plan on it."

"You won't have to." He gave her a final squeeze before breaking their embrace to look at her. "Are you ready, my Mary? I want to seal our bond, but more than anything, I just want you again." He glanced down at his erect cock and grinned. "I'll always want you again."

Mary giggled. The knowledge of his longing combined with the combined love and lust he held deep inside him for her and only her made her tingle inside, and her pussy clenched in anticipation. "Lead the way. I'm as anxious as you are."

They walked through the grass down the hill to the lake. As they got closer, Mary saw a large area carpeted with small flowers. In the middle of it was a large feather bed with plush comforters and pillows. It looked like something out of a fairy tale.

"Did you do all this?" Mary had never seen anything so romantic except in movies.

"Does it meet your approval, then?" He squeezed her hand as they stopped just at the edge of the carpet of flowers.

"It's breathtaking, Drykin. You're such a softs0u9 She laughed when he cringed.

"I'm a dangerous hunter. There's nothing soft about m0u9

"You're a romantic at heart. Some would say that makes you a softs0u9 Mary smiled and caressed his face. This man wasn't soft, no matter her teasing. He was strong. Strong of body, strong of mind, strong of heart.

"Absolutely not." He stood up straighter, captured her hand in his, and brought it to his lips. "It only means I love you and would do anything I could to make you happy. Any man who loves another like I love you is the strongest man in the world because of his willingness to look like a romantic foolu9

A deep, gruff voice cut through the picture perfect scene and Mary's heart lurched. "Well, you got the fool part right, anywayu9

Mary whipped around to see the same Drakonion who'd tried to kidnap her earlier. He stood there, arms crossed and not moving. His wings were tucked behind him, and it looked like he meant to do nothing other than stand there.

"Brother," Drykin growled, pushing Mary behind him and grasping her wrist. Mary tried to peep around him, but Drykin spread his wings, effectively blocking her view and shielding her from the Drakonion at the same time. "You cannot interfere."

"I'm not here to interfere," the Drakonion hissed. "I'm here to make sure the deed is done. If she backs out, then I want her."

"She's here of her own free will. Had she not wanted this, she'd have returned to her world."

"Ah, but she did. And I claimed her."

Mary could hear the evil lust, but it was more than that. This creature didn't want her for a companion—he was looking for someone to fulfill his own needs and desires. He cared nothing for her. Not that it mattered.

She wanted to say something, but she knew Drykin wanted her to stay silent. He knew the other man better than she did, so Mary only listened and tried to be ready should there be a need to flee.

"She didn't choose, brother. She only needed time to accept something strange to her. Because I love her, I chose to give her that time." Mary could feel the frustration within Drykin. He knew the other man had no idea what he meant, but he was compelled to try to explain anyway. "You can't force a woman to love you, brother. She has to accept you as you are and you have to accept her. When it's true love, nothing else matters. Don't you see?"

The Drakonion snorted. "What ever you say. We were promised a woman and I mean to get one."

"Not you, brother." Mary could feel the sadness envelop Drykin, and she wrapped her arms around his waist. He covered her hands with one of his. The need to hide her from the threat of the Drakonion was almost as strong as the need to draw from the strength she offered him. "You chose to harm that which we were sent to protect. Until you reaffirm to the cause set before us, you'll never receive your reward."

"I gave three millennia of myself with nothing to show for it!" The Drakonion exploded with angry words.

Mary cringed and tried to let Drykin loose in case he needed to fight, but he held her to him.

"Because you weren't ready." Drykin tried his best to get through to the man he called "brother," but Mary knew Drykin was convinced the man wouldn't see reason. He was lost. At least for now. "Had you been in my situation, could you have given your woman the chance to return home and decide on her own what she would do with her life? Had she not been willing to give up all she had at her earthly home—family, friends, a career, anything—would you have let her go so she could be happy?"

"Never! And you were a fool to let yours. I would have taken her for my own."

"She felt your intent, brother. You would have fed from her psychic energy until she was drained, then killed her." Drykin snorted in disgust. "And you think yourself ready for a reward such as this. You've lost your purpose. You need to remember the oaths we swore and what it meant to us back then."

"I refuse to aid a race that hates the very sight of me."

"Which is why you were never given your woman. You don't understand what it is to love. When each life you are unable to save cuts you to the quick, then you're ready."

Sadness almost overwhelmed Mary. Tears actually sprang from her eyes. She couldn't feel the emotions from the Drakonion, but Drykin could. It was hard to tell, but she was pretty sure it was the Drakonion she was feeling through Drykin.

Drykin lowered his wings slightly and Mary peeked around them. The large creature before them was bent slightly, almost in defeat. He looked as if his last hope had slipped away and he would be lost forever.

"I fear it is too late for me, my friend." She almost didn't hear the words from the Drakonion, he spoke them so softly. "I have killed too often and reveled in it to be upset over one death. I've become the very thing I hunted."

"Can you still feel my emotions, brother?" When the Drakonion nodded, Drykin continued. "Then witness our joining. It may hurt your heart, but it might also be the very thing that saves you."

"You would have me, the enemy, bear witness when you claim your mate?" The Drakonion snorted. "You're not as smart as I thought. I'd as soon rip both of you to shreds than to watch you fuck the human whore."

"Your feelings name you a liar. Besides, you're not my enemy. You're my brother."

Both men stood straight and proud, staring at each other for several moments. Finally, the Drakonion sighed. "As you

wish. I will witness your union and hope it gives me resolve to find my path that I might once again become a Darkling."

In a show of trust, Drykin turned his back to the Drakonion and wrapped his arms around Mary. Gently, he lifted them both to the feather bed in the middle of the flowers and lay down with her. Drykin waved his hand and a dome glowed around them once, then vanished.

"What was that?" Mary looked for signs the dome remained, but saw none.

"For our protection. I trust my brother, but not that much."

"I don't understand all that's going on. I'm assuming we make love now, but how does that change things?"

He kissed her then and she really didn't care. Still, he explained in between kisses and removing her light garments.

"It's merely a ceremony. Sometimes it's witnessed by friends and family, other times, it's done in private. It's done outdoors in reverence to the wonders God has created, but is not strictly necessary. I want it this way simply because I think you look lovely surrounded by flower petals in the afternoon light."

"Well, when you put it that way..." Mary's smile was captured by Drykin's lips, and she was soon lost in a blistering blaze of passion. He created it so effortlessly in her. The slightest touch of his mouth set her off. Mary wanted nothing more than to let him explore her body at will. She touched him, too, but it felt too good to move sometimes.

After a while, she gave up. Hands over her head, she surrendered herself to him, crying out softly when he captured one ripe nipple in his mouth. Mary stroked the curve

of his head and the rise of one horn. It should have reminded her how different they were, but she celebrated their differences. His rich, dark skin next to her creamy white skin was the least of it, too.

When Mary finally wrapped her arms around him to pull him on top of her, her fingers found the juncture of his back and wings. He shivered and Mary filed it away. Obviously a pleasure point.

She continued to stroke his wing arm until she coaxed a surrendering groan of his own from him. Wrapping her legs around him, Mary pulled him against her, his cock rubbing insistently against her clit now. Sweat dampened both their bodies, and their breathing was harsh in the stillness of the meadow.

Drykin stilled her movements with a firm hand on her hip. His leg was bent and his cock positioned at the perfect angle to enter her in one swift thrust, the head of it nestled at the entrance of her cunt.

"For the name, Drykin, I freely give you my heart, my soul, and my body. I am yours until the day we both return home to the Father. There will never be another for me, my Mary."

Mary was touched by the lovely vows, but wasn't certain what she needed to do. She searched his eyes for the answer, but found only love shining there. He didn't expect anything from her, but she felt compelled to say something in return. If she were to get married, she would start their lives on equal ground.

"For having a tender heart and loving me enough to let me choose my own path, I give you the same that you've given me. My heart, my soul, and my body are yours. There will never be another for me either, my Drykin."

She had time to register his surprise before he thrust into her in a swift stroke. After that, nothing else mattered.

Drykin wrapped his arms around her and pumped into her body, both giving and receiving pleasure. He seemed to pick images out of her mind of things she wanted him to do and used them to pleasure her. Not only did he keep a steady rhythm going, but he stroked her body and tweaked her nipples until he built her pleasure to a fevered pitch.

Without a word, he flipped them over and positioned Mary astride him, his hands resting lightly on her thighs. Mary needed no further encouragement. She moved over him, riding him and grinding her pussy onto his cock. She twisted her hips and watched as his eyes darkened in pleasure and his mouth opened to gasp slightly.

"You are truly a beautiful, giving woman, my Mary." His voice was harsh in his pleasure, but Mary found she loved the sound. She loved knowing she could do this to him, and that the lust wasn't all one-sided. Still, she was ready for more. She wanted to come and take him with her.

As easy as that, Drykin flipped them again and began fucking her in earnest. Mary wrapped her legs around his waist and used his body as leverage to thrust her pelvis at him as well. The pleasure tingling in her clit was maddening. He seemed to let her hover over the edge for several minutes before finally shifting his pelvis slightly and rubbing her clit

with his pubic area. Once the friction started, so did Mary's orgasm. She screamed and bucked against him with almost violent intensity.

"That's it, my Mary. Come for me." The veins on either side of his neck stood out starkly in his strain. Mary knew he was holding back for her and she would have none of it.

"Come with me, Drykin. Come inside me and seal our union. I want all of you. Don't hold back. Please!"

As if it were the trigger he needed, Drykin shouted and thrust into her one last time. He roared his completion as his hot seed spilled inside Mary to coat her pussy.

It was the ultimate bliss!

Mary was dizzy from her too-fast breathing, but she knew it would pass. Drykin clung to her as tightly as she clung to him, and it was only then that she realized her eyes were squeezed shut. With a strangled laugh, she opened them.

Golden sunlight surrounded them, its radiance unlike anything Mary had ever seen. Drykin looked skyward and smiled.

"Thank you, my Lord. Thank you so much for this great gift." His whispered prayer was said with the utmost reverence, and Mary breathed a quiet, "Amen."

Almost as an afterthought, Drykin looked around them. The Drakonion was nowhere to be found. Mary felt the sadness in him, but he couldn't sustain it. It just wasn't in him to be sad at this moment. His brother meant a lot to him, but he was his own man. Drykin knew this and refused to dwell on things he couldn't change.

"He may yet come around, you know." Mary kissed Drykin's cheek and turned him back to face her.

"It's possible." He smiled. "It's out of my hands. I'll help if he asks, but he's got to follow his own path."

"So, are we official?" Mary stretched, thrusting her breasts at him slightly. He didn't let the opportunity pass, but took one nipple in his mouth and pulled lazily, rolling them to their sides.

"That we are. Do you have any regrets?"

"Only that I went back that first night."

"Don't regret that. It brought my brother to me and may have saved him. Everything happens for a reason."

"Will you go after him? I know you want to." Mary didn't want Drykin in danger, but wouldn't question him if he chose to follow the Drakonion.

"No. He'll come back to me eventually. When he does, I'll be waiting for him. Right now, all I want to think about is you and how many ways we can celebrate our union before the morning."

Mary grinned a wicked smile. "Well, I've got an idea."

Drykin's eyes narrowed a moment before widening in surprise. "I'm not sure I can find that much Jell-O. Besides, I don't think my wings will fit in the tub."

Mary laughed and hugged him close. "I'll settle for chocolate pudding and the shower then. But as soon as you get a bigger tub..."

[Back to Table of Contents]

Marteeka Karland

Erotic romance author by night, emergency room tech/clerk by day, Marteeka Karland works really hard to drive everyone in her life completely and totally nuts. She has been creating stories from her warped imagination since she was in the third grade. Her love of writing blossomed throughout her teenage years until it developed into the totally unorthodox and irreverent style her English teachers tried hard to rid her of.

Want to see what's up with Marteeka? Check out her website at www.marteekakarland.com or join her yahoo group at marteekakarland-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. Marteeka always welcomes e-mail from her readers. You can reach her at mkarland@gmail.com.