

Changeling Press

L. SHANNON

GAMES
OF
Chance

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Games of Chance

L. Shannon

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Games of Chance

L. Shannon

What does a demon give his mortal lover for their one-year anniversary?

Chance knows exactly what Josh wants—his former lover, Brandon. The three can be happy together, but only if Brandon is willing to share ... All Chance has to do is push Brandon to the limits—and prove he's worth the risk.

The perfect gift. That's what Chance needs. And in this case that elusive item would be a silly, reluctant mortal gift-wrapped with a big bow.

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Chapter One

Why couldn't Josh desire exotic, hard to get flowers, insanely huge diamonds, or something else equally attainable? No, what Josh really wanted, even if he'd never said it out loud, was another chance to be with his former lover, Brandon Mathews. And if that's what Josh wanted, damned if Chance wouldn't find some way to give it to him.

There was no time to lose getting the deal set up. Five days to convince a demon-hating mortal to welcome them into bed and willingly frolic away a few hours. Just five days until Josh returned from his business trip. Just in time for a weekend getaway planned for the sole purpose of celebrating the day he'd almost died and ended up getting saved by a demon.

Which was why Chance was lurking in Brandon's apartment.

The sound of a key in the lock signaled the wait was over. Brandon stepped inside and closed the door. The scent of sex clung to him, clearly explaining the reason Brandon had taken more than three hours to get home after work. His lanky body had an air of exhaustion to it, but equally mixed with tension and irritation.

Despite the evidence, it wasn't the image of a man well satisfied. But with a little luck Chance would soon change that. Ever since their second meeting on Christmas Eve, he'd been wondering about Brandon. A few trips through Josh's

mind revealed nothing about the big question—Brandon's mysterious heritage.

* * * *

Brandon tossed his keys and cell phone into a bowl by the door and turned. He jerked upright at the sight of Chance lounging against his kitchenette counter. "What are you doing here?"

Chance smiled. "I'm drinking your beer." He raised the bottle as if in toast.

"On second thought I don't care why you're here. Get out." Brandon shrugged out of his coat and hung it up. "Don't you have to be invited in or something?"

"That's vampires."

"So spawn of the devil can walk in anytime? Nice."

"I'm not sure about the other *spawn*, but I can come and go as I please."

"Whatever." Brandon glanced toward the fridge but didn't move any closer. "I wish it would *please* you to get the hell out."

The demon snagged another beer from the fridge and slid it toward Brandon. "It doesn't. At least not yet."

Brandon hesitated, then picked up the bottle, opening it with a quick twist. "Then deliver whatever threat you've come to say and then leave me the fuck alone."

"Threat? You assume I've come here to *threaten* you?"

Brandon flinched at the demon's angry snarl. "Since you haven't tried to kill me, I'm assuming you've come to threaten to do so."

The demon stalked across the room toward Brandon, his dancing flames shifted colors going from pale gold to dark red and back in waves. "You need to lose the attitude and get something straight, mortal. I have done nothing to you, and I came here in good faith."

Brandon wanted to run, but damn it, this was his apartment. Holding his ground became harder and harder as the demon approached and the air warmed around him. "Nothing you do will change the past I had with Josh." That had to be why the demon was here. That little scene with Josh at the cabin had shown just how important their now dead relationship had been before Chance forced his way into Josh's life. He backed away, but not fast enough.

It caught him by the arms and anchored him in place, looking him in the face. "I'm not here to kill you, or even threaten you."

"Right..." As if he could trust the word of a demon. But if it wasn't lying, then why was it here? "What do you want?"

The demon released him as suddenly as it had advanced. Its oddly entrancing flames shrank until they were little more than swirls of color dancing over the creature's bare chest. "I want Josh to be happy, and apparently that requires you."

"Huh?" Shocked, Brandon stared at the creature. What did it mean? It sounded almost as if ... but no, why would it offer him the opportunity to fix things with Josh? He swallowed down a lump of emotion. "I ... Yes, I want Josh to be happy too."

"I thought as much."

"Does that mean you'll leave him alone?"

"Fuck no. I need him too much." The thing paced back and forth next to the kitchen counter. "I won't give him up. He wouldn't want that anyway."

"How do you know what he wants?"

"Unlike some selfish bastards, I asked him." It pushed the glowing hair back from its face—its unnaturally handsome face. "But I'm here about you and Josh. I know how you feel about him. I know how he feels about you."

"But you still won't get out of our lives."

"No, I won't."

"If you intend to intrude no matter what, why are you here?"

It gave a long suffering sigh. "I won't give him up, but I might consider sharing ... on one condition."

Hope burst to life in Brandon's chest. Maybe he'd get another chance with Josh. Maybe this monster would let him win his lover back. And if he could talk with Josh, in time, he'd be able to get him free of the demon's hold. But there was still the condition ... "What condition?"

"You have to accept me."

"Accept you as what? I accept that you seem to exist."

"I won't give him up. Your only option is to accept me as part of the deal. If you can handle being with me, then I won't stop you from being with Josh."

He swallowed. Hard. "You mean sex?" *No!* The answer was no, *fuck* no. But he locked his jaw before the words could escape. If there was a chance, no matter how risky, to help Josh, he needed to consider it.

"I mean sex." The thing moved around the counter, closing in on him until he was close enough to feel his breath. "I'm offering you as a gift to Josh. Best case scenario, if you and he work out your issues, then you may have a future together. That will not exclude me. I intend to be with Josh any time I can. I won't have you making him regret what we have, and I won't have you running off anytime I come by for a visit. I can think of only one way that this whole mess might possibly work."

"All three of us having sex."

"Yes, or at least all three of us able to have sex and enjoy every second of it. I don't give a flying fuck if you like me. But if you can't handle being with me then your opinion will make Josh miserable. I won't let that happen."

Shit. Enjoy sex with ... it? Nope, wasn't going to happen. This thing might wear a pretty skin but it was a monster. It was a demon. "Damn you..."

"Is that a no? Because say no now and I'll never offer again. Josh will be out of your reach forever. I'll make sure of it." It stepped back, toward the door.

"Wait!" He couldn't bear the thought of never seeing Josh again. Living apart all these months had driven him insane. That's why he'd risked it all to track Josh down at the cabin. His life was falling apart without Josh. He closed his eyes and sagged back against the wall. "I don't know if I can handle being with you, but I sure as hell know I can't handle living without Josh."

"I know exactly what you mean."

Warm fingers traced his jaw, but he pinched his eyes shut. Maybe if he just blocked out what was being done, maybe then he'd forget the truth. Maybe he could just lay back and accept the inevitable.

"It doesn't have to be that way." Something, a thumb, brushed over his lower lip. "Unless that kind of game is something you want ... something you've dreamed of."

Shit, he *had* dreamed of it, dreamed of a lot of things. Most his father would call the pleasure of the devil. How would this demon know...

"Yes, I can read your thoughts, your secret desires. I'll know what you want, sometimes before you do. I can play that game, or any game with you. I can give you your dream, however you want it..."

"If..." He cleared his throat. "If I say yes, will you let me be with Josh?"

"You'll say yes, because there is a dark place inside that wants the fantasy. But we'll call this a success when you make love to me with your eyes open." The fingers pressed over his mouth. "You're not ready yet, so don't bother to lie to me. Besides I can think of much better uses for your mouth."

Warm air tickled over his face a second before the brush of lips caressed his. The kiss was more air than flesh, more heat than hunger. It felt good, tempted him in that dark place that the demon had seen. God, how his father would gloat, knowing how easily he would give in.

The kiss ended but left his lips tingling.

* * * *

Chance couldn't believe his luck. Not only was Brandon on the verge of agreeing to give this a try, but he did it looking damn attractive. He wasn't model handsome or anything. It was the determined look in his eyes and the stubborn set to his jaw.

More than that, it was the reason for that determination. The willingness to fight for Josh the only way he could.

Oh, but forcing Brandon to endure wasn't his idea of a good time. No, he needed to make the mortal *enjoy*, and if that meant playing sex games that pushed the limits ... so be it.

He backed away from Brandon. "I already know you want me to play the big bad demon, forcing my will on you, but there will be rules to these games."

Brandon's gaze finally met his. "What rules?"

"I don't do rape." At least not off the job. "You've never dipped your toes into this water before, so we'll only make one rule. I expect you to be willing, even when you play at being a victim. If you can't handle it or want to stop, say your safe word. With one word, whatever game we're playing ends. That's it. That's the one rule, the only rule."

Brandon's adam's apple bobbed.

"Do you understand?"

"What if ... what if I can't say it? What if I'm gagged or something?" Brandon's question was accompanied by the vivid image of his mouth stuffed full of flaming cock.

Chance nearly laughed at the image. Would have laughed if it hadn't sent all the blood in his body racing to the cock in

question. Through a grin, he reassured Brandon. "Just think it. I'll hear and know you want to stop."

The terrified look was fading from Brandon's face, leaving behind mixed curiosity and determination with no more than a dash of fear.

The change was more than he'd hoped for this soon. Maybe Brandon's fear of things nonhuman would be easier to conquer than he'd first thought. Once the fear was gone, this game would be so much more fun. He could hardly wait to get started. "What will your safe word be?"

"Can the safe word be Josh?"

"I don't think that would work too well. Frankly if you don't think of him often during this little experiment of ours, I don't really see the point in bothering. Just so we're clear on the facts, I'm doing this, offering you this opportunity, as a gift for Josh."

Brandon's back straightened. "Well, just so we're completely clear. I think that if you cared for Josh, you'd get the hell out of his life. Or better yet, make him forget that you even exist. Whether I'm in his life or not, being tied to a demon is never going to be in his best interests."

"Good. We understand each other. Now, what is your safe word?"

"Banana split."

"Don't forget it." The anger and challenge dancing in Brandon's eyes was very enticing. They might not ever get to the point where he could trust him, but these tests might be a hell of a lot of fun anyhow.

"Now what?"

"Into your bedroom and strip."

Brandon's jaw fell open. "Now?"

"Now. Get out of those clothes and show me what you've got." His mind shot back to Christmas Eve. He hadn't seen Brandon naked then, but he'd felt those lips around him. More of that would be good, but considering the fear coursing through the mortal, he'd have to go slower. At least until Brandon conquered that bigotry.

Looking deeper into Brandon's mind, he examined that dark desire that he denied so vehemently aloud. It was a glimpse into being dominated, but Brandon had never so much as dipped his toes into those waters. Even now with a simple command like "strip" Brandon rebelled, fought against the desire to submit and obey.

Chance chuckled and then laughed harder when Brandon jumped at the sound.

This game of submission Brandon wanted to try would let Chance take control of the play, and help Brandon feel like he had no choice. Relieving the mortal of all the self-recriminations and guilt. Chance could understand and accept the excuse. It wasn't as if he didn't have his own agenda here. He crowded the mortal backwards across the small living space and into the bedroom.

Brandon pushed down his slacks, stepping free of the legs before sinking onto the bed.

"Lay back and relax. I just want to explore your body this time."

"Explore?" Brandon hesitated for a second then reclined slowly.

"Yes, explore. Touch and taste you. Learn what you like and don't."

"Taste? I ... I don't want you to bite me or drink my blood or anything."

He didn't bother to reassure Brandon this time. The fool was in for a surprise, because if Chance wanted to bite or nibble he wasn't going to ask permission. And considering the way Brandon's eyes had flashed inhuman gold during their last meeting, it was past time he got over the bigotry he'd been spouting. "Some things will be your choice, but most of this game will offer you only one decision. Either give in or use your safe word."

Chance threw energy into the exposed sheets on the bed. Within his power the simple cloth simulated life and twisted on the bed, forming long ropes. They wrapped around Brandon's wrists and pulled him more firmly onto the bed.

With a burst of fire, he dissolved his clothing and advanced on Brandon in nothing but flames.

"Ugghh!" Brandon jerked back, pulling on the restraining rope sheets.

Banking his flames, he slowed his approach, reaching for Brandon's long, tense thigh with one hand. Nearly all his demonic characteristics were in check. He didn't hide his flames, but kept them tight and hot against his skin.

Brandon's leg stayed whipcord tight, but his head fell back against the pillow. Through barely parted lips he whispered, "For Josh."

For Josh. God, they were a pair, weren't they. Neither completely willing, but both trying so hard to find something

that would work ... *for Josh*. Slow was not his thing but this time he'd hold everything back if he had to, fight his very nature just to give this mess a chance of working.

He slid his hand down to Brandon's knee, stroking, caressing, letting his fingers glide over the flesh, letting his heat sooth Brandon like a warm blanket. With a motion so gradual that not even a gazelle would want to flee, he moved between Brandon's spread thighs. His hands traced down to massage calves and feet, then back up to knees and thighs.

Brandon closed his eyes against the sight of the demon, focusing on the gentle touches, imagining that it was Josh there kneeling between his thighs, petting him all over.

He and Josh had made love plenty of times, but had they ever just touched each other? Had it ever been like this lazy rising pleasure that was almost innocent, almost devoid of sexual demand?

He couldn't remember. Didn't think they'd ever taken the time to just enjoy each other, but he was sure that given another chance ... *Chance*. Damn it.

The demon's name ruined the mirage of Josh. Even without opening his eyes he could see the demon leering at him, flames devouring the air and burning over his skin. It was an abomination, a creature from hell, a spawn of the devil.

Never let the devil in, son. That way leads to nothing but damnation. His father's words cut into the pleasure. They were the only truth. How many times had his father lectured him on avoiding sin, especially sins of the flesh? He should

get up and run like hell, run from the hell that this demon carried in his heart.

Warm hands closed over his cock. His already dammed flesh betrayed him completely. It hardened against his will, rose eagerly into the touch. He pulled against the sheets, fighting back the doubts. For Josh, he'd ignore his father's sermons. For Josh, he'd risk damnation. It was the only way he could save Josh from his own folly. He had to do this, had to find a way to cope with the demon's touch.

Just a little bit of damnation for him and he'd be able to convince Josh to ... to what? To run away? Was there anywhere in the world that Chance couldn't find them? What other choice was there? It wasn't as if Josh could just break up with the demon. Surely if he could, he would have by now.

The warm strokes up and down his cock flared his blood to life. He rolled his hips into the touch while his mind fled from the reality.

The church—it was their only hope. He'd talk Josh into going with him. They'd go to his father. If anyone knew how to chase off demons, it would be the old man.

Increasing pressure, heat and speed pushed all thought away. Eyes still pinched shut, he tried to resurrect the image of Josh kneeling between his thighs. Josh's warm breath blowing over his cock a moment before the caress of lips and gentle scrape of teeth. The lapping of a fiery tongue lavishing attention along the length with each downward kiss.

Pleasure rolled through him in waves. It felt good. Everything felt so very good.

The rope sheets relaxed.

He caught them, clung to them in painfully tight fists. Arching against the restraints, his body tightened, sharpening the sensation. Pulses of pleasure. Oh God, what was he doing with his tongue? Circles of pressure up and down his cock. Swirls of sensation dragging a moan from deep within.

His heart crashed loudly, the pulse of his body all consuming, his body bucking against his grip on the sheets, against the pleasure, against how very much he wanted it all, wanted the feel of those demon lips...

Wanted it. He wanted it.

"No!" He bellowed out in shock, gasping in air while thrashing. *No more!* He couldn't fall, couldn't accept it, couldn't want it ... *Banana Split!*

The orgasm slammed through him, stealing his breath and locking his muscles.

Wrapping his arms tight, hugging himself as the pleasure eased leaving only the guilty aftermath. As he sagged back his eyes opened.

And there was Chance, standing at the foot of the bed. Dark red flames swirled over his body in angry licks. The fire didn't hide the splatter of white come on his chest, nor the huge curved erection jutting from between his thighs.

Brandon's body reacted to the image with a twitch. The demon had brought him to a fantastic orgasm. But that wasn't enough. No, it was, and it was too much. Everything about the thing was designed to tempt and it was damn good at its job.

He was tempted.

"As promised, the safe word means I stop." Chance's voice was a low angry growl. "But you'd better know this going in, I only play to win. I'll give you three strikes and then I'm out. Or should I say you'll be out of Josh's life. Consider this strike one. Say or think your safe word two more times and our game is over, forever." Chance's flames shot higher. "Tell me you understand."

Shit. He could call it off now. Maybe he should. Did he actually think he could deal with the demon's demands and not scream for mercy? Maybe not, but for Josh he'd try his damndest, even if it cost him his soul. "I understand."

In a blinding column of flame, the demon disappeared, leaving no hint of when or if it would return. *Once the devil's inside, you'll lose more than your soul to get it out again.* Dad was right again. This deal he'd agreed to was going to be costly. He wasn't going to get out of it unscathed even if he did "win" the chance to be with Josh.

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Chapter Two

Brandon was tired past the point of irritation. After a long sleepless night and distracted day at the office, his usually demanding libido was terrifyingly subdued.

Bed would look good about now, but there was no way he was heading home yet. Another face off with Chance in his current state would just set him up to fail. Still ten minutes from his apartment, he pulled into a space in front of the Royal Palm. He couldn't go home, couldn't face that demon yet.

Minutes later he was through the hotel, at the poolside bar with a whiskey sour in hand and the sun dipping over Miami. Maybe a drink or a dozen would make going home easier. And if it didn't, at least there was a hotel handy.

Downing the first drink didn't do much. The second shifted him to some surreal reality where the lounging tourists looked more out of place than the demon had the night before. February in Miami. Cool but still balmy enough for swim trunks and martinis. There might only be a dozen people in and around the pool, but as luck would have it most of them were ultra attractive men. And halfway through the third whiskey, he began to appreciate the sunset view as well as the several hard bodies.

One blond swimmer left the pool behind and moved to the bar beside him. "You don't look like a tourist."

Brandon eyed the guy up. "What gave it away? The fourth drink or crumpled suit?"

"Can't be all that bad, can it? Handsome fellow like you should know how to relax."

He choked on the swallow of whiskey. "Excuse me?" He was being hit on and the blond guy wasn't even bothering to be subtle.

Hands up and putting a little more space between them, the blond shook his head. "Sorry man, didn't mean to read you wrong."

"You didn't." At the first hint of attraction his body had jumped awake.

"Oh?" Interest returned in a blink. "I'm only here one more night. I'd love to have it go out with a bang if you get my meaning."

Oh, he got the meaning. But did he want it? His empty apartment did little to call him home and the thought of Chance waiting there ... well that was what had stalled his commute, wasn't it? Maybe what he needed was a night away. And if he didn't have to pay for the room, even better.

"You considering or just trying to think up a kind let down?"

"Considering." He took another long swallow of his drink. A casual hook up in a random bar ... it was much the usual fair for him. The guy was hot enough for a one nighter for sure. But was he hot enough to push out memories of an old lover? Or of a demon with unholy demands? God, he hoped so. He downed the last of the drink. While the whiskey still burned its way down his throat, he pulled the guy into a short hot kiss.

The kiss tasted of some fruit drink.

Suddenly the choice was made. It wasn't the kiss or the come on or even the promise of sex. It was the excuse, the place to hide to avoid the hell his life had become. It was an ugly truth, but one he could live with. "Let's go."

Somewhere on the ride up to the fourteenth floor he learned the guy's name was Joe and he was in town for his cousin's million dollar wedding. Brandon was pretty sure he hadn't bothered to ask for either bit of information.

Didn't need names to fuck. Didn't need them to hide, either.

He nearly bolted into the room and clothing hit the floor in a trail. Past a hot tub almost to the bed. A flash of warmth hit his back, a familiar flash. He spun already knowing it would be Chance covered in those damn hell fires. His flinching jerk left him off balance.

"Easy man." Whatever his name was ... Joe—no flames. Just Joe. "You look like you saw a ghost. A big scary one."

He swallowed past the fear. It was just the guy from the bar. Just like any other, just here for a fast fuck and then off on their separate paths. "It's nothing." He was down to his slacks but Joe still had on his trunks. "Let's get down to business, shall we?" Before he had another hallucination about the damn demon.

Hallucination brought on by drink? I've been called worse. The whispered thought crawled through Brandon's mind.

It wasn't real. The guy standing before him was real. Joe was real.

An evil laugh shivered down his back. *You have your fun with what's-his-name. I'll just watch this time, since you didn't enjoy my touch last night.*

Joe was real. The voice wasn't. Joe with his thumbs under the waistband of his trunks, sliding them down over lean chiseled hips. Joe with the sexy twinkle to his blue eyes. Joe was real. There was no one watching, no demon leering through his mind.

You could always say your safe word. One utterance and I'm gone. Of course that would be strike two.

Strike two. If this was real. If he was performing for the damn demon. If he couldn't hack it, then he'd fail Josh again. No, he had a plan. He could stick to it. A few nights of torment and then he'd be with Josh and then with his father's help ... maybe they'd get free.

Fucking a man while a demon gets off watching ... Your father would love this, wouldn't he?

"Stay out of my head," he snarled quietly while fighting to keep his thoughts private, keep his plan for saving Josh a secret. If the demon knew his plan could it still work?

It might. I might let you try and take Josh away. After all, if he'd be happier without me then I'd let him go. I'd find the strength to let him go.

The promise didn't seem too demon-like.

What do you know about demons? Nothing that didn't come from a bitter old man. Ask anything you want. I've no reason to lie to you. You might even like me if you give me a chance. You might like yourself.

Not bad ... it was a demon, for God's sake.

Your father is wrong about demons, and he's wrong about you.

"Leave my father out of this!" The bellow echoed in the spacious bedroom of the suite. He hadn't meant to yell out loud like a lunatic. It had probably sent Joe running for the door. In fact, looking around he had to wonder if he'd made Joe up completely. The place was empty except for him and his imaginary voices. "Was he real at all?"

Did you want him to be?

"I want to not lose my mind."

He was real enough, but now he's gone and won't be back tonight.

"You chased away my easy lay?"

You didn't want him anyhow. You wanted the room.

"I wanted a few hours without you, but wishes are fleeting, aren't they?"

I'm not in the suite. But I am watching.

"Leave me alone."

That is not a safe word.

Brandon leaned back against the bed. The swirl of alcohol and complete loss of control over his life was too much to take. "What do you want?" The words came out hitching, each tied to a small sob of despair.

I want Josh to be happy. It's what we both want.

Defeated. That was how he felt. The demon wouldn't leave him alone, wouldn't let him strengthen his defenses. No, it would pick at him until there was nothing left. His father wasn't wrong. He'd been right all along. Demons were evil. Half demon, half as bad. His long held suspicions rose with a

wave of self-loathing. "What do you want from me, right now?" His heart thudded in the quiet, pounding out the seconds and then into the minutes.

Keep the room. Rest. I'll come for you again tomorrow night.

Tomorrow night it would start over. The fear and the uncertainty. What would be demanded, and did he have any hope of being able to comply?

Tomorrow I'll come to you. I won't touch you, not unless you want my touch. I'll watch you while you pleasure yourself. If you want I won't say a word, won't make any demands. I'll watch. Only watch.

And then the mental connection lessened, eased away like a warm breeze. And he was alone in the borrowed suite, not knowing or caring who was paying the bill. What did circle his mind like a hungry vulture was the reason the demon would offer this reprieve. It had to of known how weak he was. It claimed to know his thoughts yet it had released him instead of pushing, demanding more.

Maybe it was a lie. Maybe the demon was still lurking, or perhaps was even planning to arrive in the flesh. He lurched to his feet. Another room. He'd rent another room and then ... No, it wasn't as if Chance couldn't find him. The demon seemed to have no trouble finding him here the first time. Running to another room, or even another hotel would do no good. He sat back down, rubbing his fingers through his hair.

Rest. Oh sure, he'd rest, knowing a demon was coming for him the next night with who knew what plans...

Actually, he was exhausted. He moved across the room, past the hot tub to the small bathroom. Mechanically he turned on the water and shed the last of his clothing. He shouldn't stay here. Shouldn't let his guard down.

But still in motion, he turned to step into the shower. Gold eyes flashed in the mirror. He shut out the sight and moved the rest of the way under the water.

Glowing golden eyes, the same ones he'd seen in the mirror since childhood. His eyes, the ones his father couldn't stand looking into. By the time he'd started school and met Josh, he'd learned how to hide that unnatural shine. The glow that he never saw in other people, only himself.

And the only picture he had of his mother.

She'd had golden eyes and her skin had been so pale it could have been carved in ivory, or at least that's how it looked in the photo.

He leaned against the wall of the shower while the water rushed over his body. The tingle of each drop woke his body through the haze of exhaustion. No matter how tired his mind was, his body still had demands that had to be met.

Once he'd thought he was normal, just another male with physical needs, but they never eased, never relented. Maybe he should have jumped the swimmer when he'd had a chance. Now his only options were either jack off, or go out and pick up another stranger.

He wasn't going out.

His fingers closed around the unwanted erection.

Maybe Chance wouldn't come back tonight. Maybe he would have one night alone to rest and prepare. His father

would say, *Never trust the tongue of the devil. It lies to get inside you.*

But for once he didn't care. Maybe it was too late and the devil was already in.

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Chapter Three

Chance kept his word, leaving Brandon a one night reprieve. The emotions rushing through Brandon had been overwhelming, pushing at the brink of madness. From the beginning Chance had intended to push Brandon to the limits, but what good would it be if all that was left was a self-loathing shell?

One night without pressure wouldn't delay his plan too much. And maybe, just maybe the show of kindness would ease some of Brandon's fears.

Whatever his father had done to him had left the mortal a mess mentally. His self-perception was mangled, possibly beyond repair. Even partial comparison of Brandon to demons had flipped his lid. But he had to be part demon, part synn demon, if his raging hormones were anything to go by. Such things were rare but hardly unheard of, considering the voracious appetites of synn demons.

Poor Brandon had been ranting about how much he wanted to be left alone, but he'd been happy to fuck a stranger, had done it often in the past. And despite his fear, he'd been aroused through their whole discussion. Yeah, all signs of a synn demon.

Maybe Brandon didn't understand that side of his heritage enough to know synn demons were good guys, entrenched in codes of honor deep enough to choke on.

He should know. His mother was one. Which gave him and Brandon something in common, unless he missed his guess.

Crazy half-bloods always had hang-ups over parentage. It was unavoidable. And it sounded like Brandon's old man was a real piece of work, raising a kid he feared and hated. All things considered, Brandon could have turned out a lot worse.

Maybe he shouldn't push Brandon any more. Maybe he should just leave him alone, let him ignore his non-human heritage. But if he did that, he'd have to keep the fool away from Josh. And after wandering through Brandon's mind, that didn't seem too fair either.

If he could get past Brandon's ignorance, force him to accept his own needs, then maybe, just maybe the original plan would work. That was a damned big if—an if he needed to act on quickly. Drawing it out wouldn't be a kindness to anyone.

Chance threw himself across the realms and materialized in Brandon's bedroom. Despite his offer of silence, he'd expected to have to order Brandon to begin. Surprisingly, that wasn't so.

Brandon already lay on the bed, naked, stroking his erection languidly. A slight hesitation was the only sign he'd sensed Chance's arrival. His eyes remained closed, but his hand continued the easy rhythm, up and down in slow, firm strokes, each motion tightening, reddening the flesh of his cock.

The visual show was amazing, but it wasn't nearly enough for Chance. He needed more, needed to be in Brandon's mind and feel all the thoughts and emotions behind the actions. He pushed deeper, easing his way through the erotic images of

Josh to the deeper more intense thoughts that controlled his every move.

For Josh.

It was becoming a mantra for both of them. Through the fear of demons driven into him by a bitter, lonely father. Through the physical demands that Brandon himself hadn't understood. Through the emotional needs that the half-blood hadn't known how to accept. Through it all, Brandon saw one goal ... Saving Josh. Saving his best friend and lover from what he'd always been told was eternal damnation.

The determination, the iron resolve behind the goal, was firm enough that if Chance hadn't been just as sure, he might have doubts for Josh's happiness as well. But he knew Josh, knew what they had was real, if less than conventional. He couldn't change being a demon, didn't want to. But he and Josh could find ways to be together that would work for them.

It was only between visits that he worried about Josh being lonely, missing out on a *normal* relationship. So for Josh he would do everything in his power to break Brandon's fears, and help him see that demon kind were just as worthy of love.

The thing was, deep in Brandon's mind there was more than arousal, more than fear for Josh. Deep inside there was a curiosity about demons, a need to understand what they were and how he was tied to them. Despite his father's efforts, he still needed to connect to that other half of his being.

All he had to do was work past the fear.

Yeah, that was all. Work past thirty years of built up terror, beaten into him by the irrational man who had raised him. That's all.

He could do it. Sure, it wouldn't be easy. But it was possible.

But how?

While Brandon focused on the pulsing sensations nearly in control of his body, Chance wandered around in his mind, searching for the key to breaking the hold on his fear.

Sex.

He was half synn demon after all. Sex would be the key. But Brandon hadn't led an innocent life. Pushing his limits would take more than the usual fair. Oh no, it would lean more toward his kinky side, which he already knew Brandon had in good measure. The fantasy of being tied up was a start, but there was so much more that had tickled Brandon's interest.

He'd held back because it was wrong—according to his father. But then his father didn't approve of much about him anyhow. Not his being gay, not his one night stands, not his needing more than basic sex.

But if he needed it, then he needed it. It wasn't as if he was hurting anyone with his desires.

"Are you still there?" Brandon asked.

"Yes."

"I ... I can't come. I need..."

Opportunity was knocking. Chance slammed the door open. "What do you need?"

"Having you here, watching ... I shouldn't like it."

"But you do."

"Yes."

"But you need more. You need me to participate."

"I don't think I can ... I'm not ready for you to touch me again. Not yet." Fear flared through Brandon's mind. Not fear of the touch, but fear of his own reaction. He was terrified that he'd fail Josh. "Thank you for not ... for last night."

"We both want this to work. Tell me what you need." Behind the words he pushed emotional support into Brandon's mind, offering him acceptance at a depth the mortal had probably never been given before.

"Command me."

The request was not surprising. This was what Brandon wanted. Deep down he'd always been searching for a guide in the sexual roles he'd been trying to fit into. Now, he needed to be led to a new level. Chance could fill that role. "We'll go slow. You'll do what I ask, everything I ask. Say you will."

"I will." A hesitant smile quirked at Brandon's lips. "Should I call you Master?"

A quick glance into Brandon's mind and Chance knew the answer Brandon expected, needed. "Yes. Call me Master. Answer my demands with 'Yes, Master.' Tell me you understand."

"I understand, Master."

"Good." Chance started to settle onto the loveseat beside the bed, but the angle was all wrong, giving him no view of what he hoped would be a damn good show. Instead he stepped up onto the seat and perched on the back. "Get the lotion from your nightstand."

"Yes, Master." Brandon scrambled across the bed to do his bidding. The motion was fast but awkward.

"Slow down. There's no rush. We have all night."

"Yes, Master." Brandon's near frantic motions slowed. His muscles relaxed slightly. Pulling the lotion out he paused.

"What now?"

"What now, Master?" Chance corrected. "Use the lotion. It's cold. Put some in your hands to warm it. Then I want you to stroke yourself."

Brandon obeyed. The lotion had a sweet peach scent. It slid over the hard erection, fingers gliding over flesh.

"Stroke yourself in long slow strokes, tight. Make it hurt a little."

Brandon froze, one hand already wrapped around his cock. *Make it hurt a little?* He shouldn't like pain ... should he? Yet Chance made it sound so acceptable.

"Do as I command."

"Yes, Master." Brandon tightened his grip, letting the lotion counter his fisting hand. Without the lotion it would hurt, but with it, the pressure was exquisite, so close to pain, but deep in the heart of pleasure. His pulse vibrated through the pleasure, jumping it up to some new plane. *It's not a sin to enjoy your body.*

Maybe not a sin, but sometimes it felt like it.

"Arch your back. I want to see your cock long and hard in front of you."

He was already kneeling in the center of the bed. To arch as commanded, he shifted his weight, using one hand to balance while continuing to stroke with the other. The change

in angle and pressure was a surprise. Hard to maintain but worth the effort. His cock rose and bobbed with each hard stroke. His breath came faster. His motions moved almost out of his control.

"You will not come, not yet. Not until I command it."

Brandon gasped, fought for a thread of control. Even without looking he could see the fire dance in Chance's gaze. The demon had control and he would get what he wanted. And somehow that made the pleasure all the more illicit, more intense. Orgasm teased at his nerves, so close that its first surge was clenching his balls.

"You will not come yet. Say it."

He panted. "I will not come yet. Master."

Warm heat pooled over his back. Keeping his eyes closed, he could feel the demon, feel Chance kneeling behind him. The warm flames tickled at his skin. Hot breath blew over his right ear. "Who am I?"

"A demon."

A low harsh chuckle feathered over his neck. "Yes, I am a demon. *Who* am I?"

"You're Josh's demon. You're Chance."

"Yes, I am. Who am I to you?"

He sucked in his breath, knowing the answer Chance wanted. "You are Master."

"Good." The heat flared and then faded.

With the heat went the promise of orgasm. The intensity loosened, leaving Brandon moaning. His body ached in time with his pulse, a heady feeling that left him almost begging for that one command, the order to come.

No, he wouldn't beg.

"Not yet." Chance chuckled in a low sexy rumble from across the room.

His eyes popped open. Had the demon been there all along? Had the heat at his back been an illusion? If even his senses could be controlled remotely, what power did he have left?

None. The answer was none.

"You have a vibrator in the nightstand. Get it."

Brandon's heart jumped and then raced. While he might be a top in most of his relationships, penetration was a secret pleasure he'd kept back mostly for himself.

"Turn it on low and get more lotion."

His body clenched in celebration. His secret pleasure was about to be out in the open, at least to Chance. He followed Chance's commands, eager to get down to business.

"Drip the lotion over your cock. Let the cold awaken your nerves."

As if his nerves weren't wide awake now. The first drop landed on the head of his cock, so cold it burned. He blew the air out between clenched teeth, preparing for the next drop. One after another until the upper side of his cock was drizzled with the creamy lotion.

"God, that looks good."

"You said God. Can demons do that?"

"Of course. We are believers, after all."

Suddenly he felt a little silly. "I guess you would be." What did he even know about demons? Nothing but his father's

rants. More and more he had doubts about the old man's accuracy.

"You can ask about us if you have questions. It's not the way most humans think. Although there is evil in the world, we aren't it, or at least most of us aren't."

He had questions. Many of them. But now wasn't the time or place. He shook his head and took his cock in hand. Later. Later they could talk about the role of demons in the universe. For now he didn't want to talk, didn't want to think. All he wanted was to come, and soon.

"*That* I understand. For now, no talking, no thinking. Just pleasure."

Sounded good, damned good.

"Slide that lotion over your cock and under to your balls. Rub the stones. Scrape your fingernails over them. Squeeze them the way you enjoy, harder than others might understand. Others don't matter. This is about what you want, about what you need."

How did Chance know? Was it there in his mind? How did the demon know he liked a little pain with his pleasure? Not much, just a little. He'd never had a lover who understood. Most he hadn't trusted enough to even ask.

"Trust me. I can give you what you want, what you dream of." The warm words blew over his ear.

This time his eyes blinked open in surprise. Not fear. The lack of fear surprised him more than the threat of the demon being behind him, close enough to touch. When had it happened? When had he stopped fearing the demon's attack and started expecting its contact?

"When you're ready. I'll know," Chance said from across the room. He was still perched on the back of the loveseat, but there was a new energy about him. Something tense and ... aroused. As if he might pounce at any second. It was more than a predatory look to his eyes. His human-like looks were peeling away with its impatience. The flames licking up his arms were so dark red they were almost black. The red and gold hair fluttered around him in an invisible windstorm.

But instead of terrifying, the strange inhuman appearance felt honest. Less threat and more just what Chance was. "Am I ready?"

"Almost."

Almost? The thought shivered through him. Was he almost ready to accept being with a demon? Being touched? Being fucked? His cock jumped in his hand. Maybe he was almost ready. "What do you want me to do now, Master?"

Chance sucked in his breath at the change. Not only was there acceptance in Brandon's voice, there was welcome in his mind. Welcome to a demon's touch. Something he hadn't expected to happen anytime soon.

"Master?"

"I want to watch you come."

"Yes, Master."

"I want to be closer, feel the energy from your orgasm. You are ready for that much."

It was true. Brandon wasn't ready for everything, but this would only be one step closer. It was a step they were both ready for. Giving him no more time to build a fear that was

already past, Chance moved in on Brandon, gliding onto the bed, placing himself behind Brandon's kneeling position.

The brief tension in Brandon's muscles relaxed in the space of three heartbeats.

"Stroke yourself." Chance didn't need to touch his lover. He let his heat reach out for Brandon, the reality of the illusions he'd built earlier. Now it was his real flames, tickling out around them. Now it was his very real arousal that fed the flames.

One hand moving in a slow steady rhythm, Brandon did as he was commanded. His actions were mechanical for a moment or two and then the sensations grew and with them focus was tightened to what they both wanted.

"Pick up the vibrator. Use it to stroke the underside of your cock."

The rough hum of the vibe filled the room. The vibrations echoed through the bed, just enough to caress Chance's ass. Brandon shifted, settled back onto his heels, bringing him close, oh so close to Chance's flames.

"Lower. Push the vibe toward your balls, around your balls." He moved just a bit to the side to better see how Brandon moved, what he did to pleasure himself. "Good. Slow firm motions. Does the lotion feel good?"

"Yes, Master. Very."

Chance drizzled a few more drops over the base of Brandon's cock. "You want the vibe deep. I know it. You know it. Rub it through all that lotion and use it to tease your ass."

The vibe moved around Brandon's bobbing cock, until it glistened with the slick lotion. Then it danced lower, circling his balls and dipping out of sight.

Chance growled at the loss even while the vibrations deepened with the solid connection against Brandon's body. "No. I want to either watch or feel. Which will it be?"

Brandon tensed. Seconds passed with the vibrator not moving at all. "I ... You choose, Master."

Pleasure coursed through him at the invitation. Despite the offer, he didn't dare do as he really wanted. That would entail flipping Brandon over and fucking him raw. For now he'd settle for a lesser advance. "Lean back against my body."

Brandon sank into his arms. Images flooded his mind. So many variations of submission that he'd never found the courage to seek.

"Soon. But for now, just relax and let me feel your pleasure." With Brandon in his arms, the angle made it easy for one or both of them to bring Brandon to orgasm. This time he'd watch, but perhaps next time ... "Use the vibrator, Brandon. Fuck it and think of me."

Think of him? Brandon could think of nothing else. The demon was freeing him, letting him finally do what he needed, without guilt or regret. His secret pleasure of taking the vibrator was no longer a thing to hide. Rather it had become something to share.

He pushed it against his entrance, teasing the moisture over the tight opening. The pulse of the vibrations moved through his body with wave after wave of pleasure. And in Chance's heat he felt the echo of it come back around him.

Knowing that Chance enjoyed the action as much as he did added a new element to the pleasure.

Alone it was good, but together ... He groaned at the intensity.

Dipping the vibe in, forcing it to penetrate, he arched up against the rush of sensation. It was blinding and consuming, and in that moment all he knew was the feel of Chance's flames and the wild thundering of his own heart.

The orgasm slammed through him, stealing his breath and locking his body in a long hard ache, softened only by Chance's cradling arms and his softly whispered command ... *Come for me.*

And he did, with a bellow. Brandon came and came until he felt limp with the relief of it.

"You are beautiful in your pleasure."

Heat rushed to his cheeks. How was he supposed to answer that? "Umm ... thank you?"

"I can think of better ways to thank me, but you're not ready." Chance stroked Brandon's short hair back from his face. "Twice now I've brought you pleasure and taken none for myself. When I come next time we will have sex."

Shock rolled through him. "What if I'm not ready?"

"I will give you whatever fantasy you want. I'll take you in the way you most desire. But know this—tomorrow night, I will take you."

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Chapter Four

After the best night's sleep Brandon had ever had, his work day flew by. At first he tried to pretend it was relief, having survived another encounter with the demon, but long before lunchtime he was forced to admit the truth.

He'd enjoyed himself. And something about the encounter had been more satisfying than any other experience. He had a lot of experience. But this had been different. Being with Chance had been exciting, like a dance at the edge of danger. No matter what the demon promised, there was the real possibility that in the end Chance would take his life or at least his soul. Wasn't that what demons did?

And tonight ... Chance would come again. Come in every sense of the word.

I will take you...

He could hardly wait. Excitement kept him on edge until finally he relented, leaving work early to race back to his apartment. Only once there he had no way of guessing how long it would be until Chance arrived.

Two hours passed and still no sign of the demon. Was this how Josh felt, this anticipation, the thrill of waiting for something dangerous and way past moral? Wanting it even a little surely meant he was already damned. And he wanted this, wanted to be taken by the demon a hell of a lot more than a little.

He shouldn't want Chance. This whole mess was for Josh, to get him away from the demon. Wasn't it? Could he be

wrong about saving Josh? What if Josh really didn't need to be saved? Josh certainly didn't think he needed rescuing. In fact, Josh had seemed perfectly happy to be in Chance's arms.

What was the truth? Was Chance evil? Or just another kind of being, one that was honestly worthy of Josh's affection?

"You want to know about demons, about me."

Brandon spun. This time there had been no flare of heat, no warning of Chance's arrival. His heart raced in high gear, but Chance hadn't offered any threat. Instead he'd fallen onto the loveseat like a man exhausted. The position was curiously passive. Even the demonic flames were little more than dim blue swirls over his skin. Head resting against the plush back, hair laying almost limp across the fabric, the demon looked like he lacked the strength to move, let alone endanger anyone.

"You look beat. Maybe we should do this another night."

"I am beat, but since the only two things that will revive me are sex and fire, I'll let you decide if you want me to burn down your apartment building or not."

"Sex or fire huh? Is that true for all demons?"

"Nah, we're all different, but we all need something."

He sure hoped there was more to the explanation, because Chance was right. He did want to know more about demons, specifically about Chance. When the seconds ticked by, he prompted, "What kind of demon needs sex or fire?"

"I'm half fire demon and half synn demon. Born of sex and fire. After a shitty long day like today, I crave a lot of both." Chance's body had yet to move and his words came slower

and slower. "Would do me wonders if you'd find the courage to come over here and kiss me."

This wasn't how he'd pictured the night going at all. All day long he'd imagined Chance arriving in a pillar of flames and ordering him to submit, to give over his will and obey every whim. To be dominated. To be fucked into complete submission. Instead Chance was collapsed on his loveseat about as passive as a kitten.

"I don't feel up to ordering you around just yet."

"But soon?"

"Either kiss me or I'm going to torch your bed. Then we'll see."

Said in more than a breathy whisper the threat might have worried him, but as it was, Brandon couldn't help grinning as he advanced on the demon. Standing before Chance, he paused. How did one kiss a nearly unconscious demon?

In a lightening fast snag, Chance answered the question, dragging Brandon down to a long, deep, fire filled kiss. There was nothing tentative or passive about the kiss. Chance forced Brandon to straddle his lap. His lips were possessive and commanded despite his claim of being too tired to do so. And his tongue...

Brandon opened to that swirl of flame and accepted that heat deep inside. Each thrust of tongue swept through him deeper than the one before, until he felt half devoured. Heat coursed through his veins, warming him to his toes, leaving him tingling and ready to beg for more.

Are you ready to be commanded?

He pulled back enough to pant one word. "Yes."

"You remember what I promised. I will take you, one way or another before the sun rises." Between words, Chance's lips traced a line down his neck, nuzzling the open shirt out of the way. "Tell me what you desire. Tell me your darkest fantasy and that is how I'll take you. That is how I'll get my pleasure."

Brandon's mind whirled. The dream. His darkest fantasy was surely the dream that came to him so often. At first it had been a nightmare, but the pleasure with it was undeniable. The dream was sick, something he shouldn't want, against every rule of society. *Rape fantasy. Capture fantasy.* What he wanted came with several names, but only one thing mattered. He wanted to be taken against his will.

Chance's breath whooshed out over his now bare chest.

No, he wouldn't ask for that. Couldn't. Some fantasies were never meant to be lived. Still, maybe he could have some of the dream. Not all, just a taste of the fantasy, just enough to pretend in the privacy of his own mind. "Any fantasy?"

"Anything short of bringing Josh here tonight."

He swallowed. He hadn't even thought of Josh. Being with him should have been his fantasy. "I want to be bound." *And punished for forgetting Josh.*

And in his mind he'd imagine Josh, trust Josh to tie him, control him. Still, it was Chance he was more or less sitting on. It was the demon's intimidating dick pushing at his thigh.

"And blindfolded."

"Are you sure?" When he nodded, Chance shifted his weight forward, dropping his feet to the floor until they stood

facing each other. "So we're back to using your safe word as the only out. Tell me you understand."

"I do." This time when he offered his submission to a demon it came with far less fear. Chance had done just as he'd promised. He'd stopped with the very thought of the safe word. It was a safety net that gave him as much, perhaps even more power in the game they were about to play.

Flames burst up around Chance's outstretched hand and when they settled a blood red scarf appeared. "Your blindfold as requested. Kneel on the bed with your back to me."

His heart raced. It was time. Following Chance's command, he knelt on the bed and waited. Heat flared behind him. Chance moved closer. With warm, sure hands, Chance slipped off the business shirt and then bound his wrists together in front of him.

Chance eased the scarf across Brandon's face, covering his eyes completely. Blindfolded. It reminded him so much of Christmas Eve, when he'd asked Brandon to be blindfolded to hide his real identity from the mortal. That time he'd been overwhelmed by Brandon's sexual needs. He hadn't understood his weakness until later.

Brandon was no ordinary mortal. The flare of supernatural in his eyes after the encounter had revealed a secret that even Josh hadn't known. And the more he was with Brandon he knew how it had been kept so well. Somehow Brandon didn't know the truth himself.

Even now, he could feel the non-mortal, demon essence, that deeper need being awakened in Brandon. The flare of

desire called to him, demanded action, demanded satisfaction.

He moved closer, stroking his hands down Brandon's bare back. "Tell me who I am."

"Master."

Dipping into Brandon's mind unveiled an image of Josh. Disappointment rushed through him. He'd wanted to be the one filling Brandon's thoughts. Much as he loved Josh, much as they both did, he wanted this to be about them, not about Josh. But he wouldn't demand Brandon think of him. This was about Brandon's fantasies, after all. "Stand up."

When Brandon moved to get off the bed, he stopped the motion.

"No, stand on the bed. You have too many clothes." He helped Brandon stand and turn so that Brandon's flat stomach was just above his lips. He indulged for a moment, trailing fiery kisses around the dent of his belly button. Dipping his tongue in to simulate the coming sex, he was pleased when Brandon leaned into the touch and buried his fingers in Chance's hair.

With a few deft motions he had Brandon's pants unfastened and sliding down his long legs. Brandon's cock jutted outward, tenting his boxers. Chance caressed the eager flesh through the cotton for several strokes before impatience had him shoving the cloth out of the way and dipping forward to claim the flesh with his mouth.

He poured heat into the connection, feeding Brandon's desire with his own.

Still the image in Brandon's mind wasn't of him. In his lover's mind, Josh was the one suckling at his bucking cock. Josh's hands cupped his ass. Josh's teeth scraped over him in frustration.

A sad sort of anger burned through him. Maybe Brandon would never be able to want him without the illusion. Maybe this was all they had.

He pulled back with a growl.

Could he hold it against Brandon? No, he couldn't be pissed at the mortal for doing what he had to. And he wasn't about to hate himself for not being good enough. Not his style. *Someday soon, you will love me with your eyes open.*

Brandon's muscles tightened, the only sign that the thought had broken the illusion for even a moment.

Chance angled Brandon down to the mattress a little less than gently. The soft bedding absorbed the face first *oomph*, leaving Brandon's ass delightfully up in the air. With his legs still tangled in the half free slacks, he was fairly helpless.

But not helpless enough.

Chance burst his energy outward, burning away his clothing and freeing his own body to seek pleasure without restraint. "Don't move. I want you under me." He kept his voice a whisper. If Brandon needed the illusion, he'd let him keep it this time. He grabbed the lotion from the top of the nightstand. Crawling up Brandon's body, he rubbed his heat against the mortal's cooler skin, letting it bite at his senses.

Capturing Brandon's bound hands, he dragged the limbs toward the head of the bed, stretching Brandon out before him like a buffet.

His body ached with need. The long day seemed to include nothing but irritation, and there had been no sex or fire in sight. Now the urge to take someone—anyone—was almost beyond endurance. And the fact that this was Brandon made the need all the more sharp.

Nipping at Brandon's shoulder he used his free hand to pet his way down Brandon's body, stroking the long tense muscles until Brandon's tension faded. Only then did he release his hands and rise up over him, straddling his thighs. "Don't move. I want you helpless."

The flash of images that flooded their connection sent Chance's flames shooting upward. Brandon tied, completely out of control and at the edge of terror. It wasn't Chance dominating him. It was Josh, of course, but the completeness of the submission was beyond anything he'd expected. It was submission without willful consent. Not rape exactly, because it was exactly what Brandon wanted, but it was damn close.

The images were gone, buried quickly behind visions of much tamer games. But he'd seen it. He knew.

And he could give it to him.

"Who am I to you?" He dragged his lotion slick fingers up between Brandon's ass cheeks. And then slid them back down, forcing their way deeper to cup his balls.

Breath stuttering, Brandon whispered, "Master."

One the next upward motion, he circled Brandon's ass with his thumb, teasing with the promise of more. "Yes, and you are mine to do with as I wish. Do you understand?"

"I am yours to command, Master." Brandon's ass rose, rubbing against his hand in the slightest of motions.

Pushing his thumb deeper with a slow penetration, Chance pressed down on Brandon's back to hold him in place, forcing him to be still when he so obviously wanted to buck against the short thrusts. "And when I give you to Josh, who will be your Master then?"

Brandon's panting breath stopped. His body stilled all motion, becoming an elegant naked statue.

"Answer me."

"Will Josh be my Master? Would he want that?"

The hesitation in the words could break the heart of a saint. Good thing he wasn't one. "Then you will belong to us both. You will belong to Josh. You will belong to me. We will use you however we desire."

"Yes, Master."

Adding more lotion, he forced one finger deep, stroking Brandon in reward. Adding a second finger and opening him wider. Preparing him. Brandon was so close to acceptance, to taking him and wanting it. There was no need to mar it with pain. He had that much patience at least.

Soon he had Brandon rocking back and forth into the finger fucking, his moans of pleasure a sure sign he would come soon.

"Please, Master..."

"Tell me what you need."

"Please, Josh. Don't make me wait."

Again with the damn illusion. Chance shifted his weight pushing the head of his cock through Brandon's slippery ass cheek. Maybe it was frustration but he didn't enter as slowly as he'd planned. Instead he took Brandon in one long deep

thrust. Hands anchoring Brandon's hips, he ignored Brandon's surprised yelp and drove himself deep over and over again. Each thrust ratcheting his fiery need higher and higher.

Brandon bucked against his hold. Not in an effort to escape, but trying to match his rhythm, trying to keep pace, and almost managing to do so. At least for a time. But it wasn't meant to last. Brandon came shouting Josh's name.

Despite the name, or maybe because of it, pleasure washed through Chance on the tail of Brandon's release, the wild orgasm easing and leaving him weakened.

He sagged beside Brandon. *Someday soon you will shout my name.*

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Chapter Five

Two nights passed with no visits, and Brandon began to think Chance wouldn't return, began to hope he would. At first he swore it was only because with Chance came hope of saving Josh. But the truth gnawed at him. He'd found pleasure in the arms of a demon. He was the demon spawn his father had always claimed.

His thoughts circled, hitting the high points over and over. All of them led to one question. Why had his father hated him so deeply? It drove him to a desperate act.

Brandon picked up the phone and called his father, determined to confront him with the question that had burned at him for years, the one question his father had always refused to answer.

The phone rang once at his father's church, and his father answered, "Pastor Michael here. How can I help you?"

"Dad, it's me."

"Hello Brandon. Are you well?"

"Yes. No, that's not true." He paused trying to find the words, expecting his father to care enough to ask. Finally he said, "I need to know about demons."

"All your life I have told you the only truth you need to know."

"You've told me they're evil, but ... there's more, isn't there? There's more about me, about my mother, more that you've always refused to tell me."

"I won't speak of her."

"Why not? Because she was a demon or because she left you?"

He could hear his father choke and then the line went dead. Hung up. His father had hung up on him.

Hitting redial, he called back.

The line opened but this time there was no pleasant welcome. No offer to help. Just the seconds ticking by.

"Dad?"

"Your mother was a succubus demon named Bryanna. She came to me when I was young and weak. She offered promises and had the body of a golden angel. She made ... made me love her. After you were born, she abandoned us. She destroyed me and spawned something dangerous in you. I tell you this now, so that you never ask again. So that you never contact me again." Again the connection closed.

The finality of the last click ended any hope of reconciliation. Brandon sank onto the bed, trying to wrap his mind around those soul shattering last words from his father.

Succubus ... that was the female incubus, wasn't it? A sex demon. He was half sex demon. Hadn't Chance tried to tell him? That made sense of his life in a way that he'd never put together before. Always, he'd needed sex, craved it. He couldn't go even a few days without it. Did his need make him evil? Did being half demon make it so?

Josh hadn't thought so. He openly admitted to loving a demon, swore that the demon wasn't evil, just different. Had Josh somehow known what he was all this time?

His head pounded at all the possibilities. Part of him suddenly felt freed. All this time he'd been a demon, or rather

half, and he had never hurt anyone. Maybe it wouldn't be so bad, just being himself, accepting his needs.

It was too much to take in. Now he urgently hoped Chance would come. Perhaps he'd be able to help sort out what it all meant.

Hours later he gave up the hope and settled into bed for another lonely night.

* * * *

Chance no longer screamed at the injustice. Instead he just hung in the chains, accepted that nothing would free him until his father decided he'd suffered enough. Thirty-six hours bound in the cold dungeon. No fire, no sex and now he was too weak to even care.

Fuck that. He cared plenty.

He just wasn't wasting energy railing at the old man aloud. He barely acknowledged his brother, Meryk, when he arrived with the evening meal. Why bother. They wouldn't put it close enough to reach. And even if they did, mortal food wouldn't do him a damn bit of good at this point.

"Chance, are you listening?"

"No."

"Well, you'd better start. Pops said you were to be released. I'm here to let you go, just didn't want to get close enough for you to burn me once I take the chains off. So answer me, are you in control enough to be unchained?"

"Just fucking do it already, asshole." He wasn't too surprised by the change of his voice, low and animal.

"Takes one to know one." Meryk unlocked the first chain. "You are one prickly bastard after a time out." The second chain released, dropping him to his knees.

"Wish to hell he'd go back to whipping us. Think I'll go eat the mortal that came up with this stupid idea."

"Not tonight you won't. You're still grounded. No leaving Abaddon until he's had a chance to talk to you."

Chance didn't bother to argue. The unquenched hunger and his aching cock demanded fucking, and he was going to give into the demand in grand style. The second the ankle cuff came off, he threw himself across the realms, ignoring Meryk's cursing. Brandon was getting fucked. He was getting his darkest fantasy.

* * * *

Brandon jerked awake. He was tied to the bed and blindfolded. His heart thundered, the only noise in an ocean of silence. "Who's there?" For a moment he wondered if Josh had returned to him. But no ... Josh wouldn't tie him up. Far as he knew Josh had never been into kink.

Chance. It had to be Chance.

Then he heard harsh breathing and in the next second he was untied. Or at least he was loose from the bed. His wrists were still bound.

"What's going on? Chance, is that you?"

"You are mine," was the only answer, and it came out as a low growl of possession. Too deep, too gravelly to be Chance but definitely male. The stranger grabbed him, rolling him

hard over the edge of the bed so he was laid face down with his bare ass angled out and up.

The position mirrored his capture fantasies. Being taken against his will ... raped. His body reacted just as it always did in the dream. A flush of excitement surged to his cock until the erection ached where he pressed against the bed.

"I know what you want." The harsh whisper blew warmly over his shoulder.

The full fantasy, of not knowing his lover, not knowing what could happen ... this was it. This stranger offered it all. But who was he? Without knowing, he might be in real danger. Even if his body rejoiced, he couldn't not fight back. The what-ifs were too drastic to pretend it was some mysterious game to be played and enjoyed. Jerking against the ropes at his wrists, he thrashed his body to the side to get free.

He was yanked back in place.

He fought again, throwing himself backwards. Damned demon blood should be good for something. Except that he was pretty sure his demon half was enjoying the hell out of the forceful treatment.

"I know you want this." Hands pushed his shoulders down hard then yanked his ass up higher.

The rough handling left him throbbing. But also unnerved. His supposed demon strength was worthless.

Fiery lips pressed against the center of his back. The stranger's growling words vibrated through him. "Even the darkest games have rules. Remember your safe word. I just pray you don't use it."

Before the words registered, those warm hands landed on his skin, moving down his body, stroking lightly, petting his sides, cupping his ass cheeks. They pushed between his thighs to cup and fondle his balls, before gliding upward to press into his ass. The slick pressure came without preamble, the shock as much pleasure as any amount of foreplay.

In and out, the short fast strokes finger fucked him until he writhed and bucked. "Please..." The urge to call the stranger Master tickled at his memory. He left it unsaid. The offer of a safe word had reminded him of Chance. Only Chance had ever pushed enough to need a safe word. But the growling voice. Could Chance sound that cold? That deadly?

The stroking broke his thoughts, drove away the fear. All he wanted ... all he needed ... "More, please. I need more. I need..."

Then it wasn't fingers, but a cock, opening him wide, splitting him in a slow, deep stroke. The thick penetration was deep, dominating. The first stroke gradual, but the second ramming through him, filling him to the point of pain.

He gasped at the invasion. Shocked with the knowledge this couldn't be Chance. The demon had been nothing but gentle. Every touch, every motion, sure and careful.

And if it wasn't Chance, who the hell was fucking him? "Who are you?" He lurched forward, away from the unknown.

But those hands were unrelenting. One held his bound wrists and the other pushed down on his shoulder. He was pinned to the bed, his legs over the edge and each and every one of the man's thrusts, drove him harder against the mattress.

Over and over the stranger took him, took and took. The strokes were sure and firm, each one deeper than the last, until he was sure he'd be split in two.

"Please..." He'd meant to say "please let me go," but his mind and body were on different wavelengths. His body knew only the friction and dominance, reveling in the pleasure of each possession, reliving the dreams. It ignored his mind screaming out that this wasn't the game he'd wanted.

The safe word hovered in reach. It was his way out, but did he want it? Would it even save him? The pleasure crested, sending his hips jerking, rubbing his cock into the blankets for that final gasping release.

Another deep stroke and another and then a growl of pleasure and a warm flood filling him up. "Tell me what you want." The panting words blew over his ear.

"Who are you?"

Now gentle hands turned him over and unbound his wrists. The blindfold fell away and there, kneeling before him was Chance. He tilted forward against the side of the bed. "Thank God you didn't ask me to stop. I don't know if I could have." Chance's voice was more even than the rough growl, but still a far cry from the smooth tones he usually spoke in. It wasn't just his voice either. His flames were almost invisible flickers over stretched bruised looking skin. His hair was tangled and from all appearances the demon was on the verge of collapse.

As relieved as he was that it had been Chance, he couldn't reconcile the beaten demon before him with the vibrant one from before. "What the hell happened to you?"

"You're not the only one with Daddy issues."

"Shit."

"You can say that again." Chance rolled his eyes and dragged himself up onto the bed. "Much as I want to, I can't stay long. If I don't come back tomorrow, you can guess I'm back in fucking time out. But know this. We're running out of time."

"What do you mean?"

"Josh is coming back in two days. I will expect an answer tomorrow about my proposition. If you and I can be in accord, then you'll be invited to our anniversary date. More than invited, hell, you'll be the gift."

"Just tell me what to do."

"Oh for fucking shit."

"What?"

"Pops is piss—" Chance was there one second and gone the next.

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Chapter Six

Chance paced the room. The ever present heat from the fiery pits might have revived him, but it did nothing to ease his irritation.

"You can't just break the rules without repercussion." Meryk, his ever annoying big brother, ranted on from the only chair in the room. "You should have expected the restrictions. You've been in and out of Abaddon every other day and he knows, hell we all know, it hasn't all been work."

How could they know that? Leading the last chance demons often had him jumping to the mortal realm. Sometimes daily.

Meryk laughed. "Work doesn't make you this happy."

He sighed. Of course it hadn't been work. He'd been spying on Brandon and visiting him in person and in his dreams. Anything to get the stubborn fool to accept his presence, even if he had to deal with Brandon's subconscious first. That on top of actual Last Chance duties had kept him gone more than here.

"Pops will overlook a visit every now and then. Just not every day, and you know that, so what's the big deal about this visit? Just let a couple days go by and then you can go see your little human again. It's not like he's going anywhere."

"Shut up, Meryk." His brother figured all the recent visits had been to Josh, but he hadn't seen Josh since the turn of the year. Josh would be returning from his business trip

tomorrow and he'd promised to make a celebration of it. He'd planned this from the beginning to the day they'd celebrate their first year together. *Like a normal boyfriend*. And like a normal boyfriend he needed the perfect gift. How could he have known just how stubborn Brandon would be? If he couldn't get one more visit in with Brandon, he couldn't be sure he'd be ready for the big day. And if he wasn't sure, then he wasn't risking it.

"Just relax. It's not like you to be this stressed. Try to remember that you're the easy going one."

He snorted. Maybe he used to be. Now he had obligations. Disappointments. He hated to let Josh down, but it was a fundamental problem with their relationship. They simply couldn't do things, be together like a normal human couple. It wasn't possible. Why did that have to be what Josh needed?

He flung himself backwards onto the bed. "Fine. I won't go anywhere. I'll stay right here in Abaddon and make Pops happy."

"Wow, offering to make Pops happy. You must be in a foul mood."

"Don't worry. I'm not going to rain fire on the Earth or anything interesting. But I'll obey him. The alternative would be no fun for any of us."

Meryk grinned and headed for the door. At the entrance, he paused. "You know, not counting the time out or today, I haven't seen you this content in a long time. Whatever your human may or may not be, he is certainly good for you." Before he could answer the surprisingly serious comment on his love life, Meryk was through the door and gone.

Josh was good for him. He'd known that almost from the start. Of course, he hadn't been with Josh lately. Did that mean Brandon was good for him too?

And how exactly was he going to finish Brandon's training without leaving Abaddon? Brandon had yet to face sex with a demon willingly.

He had planned to get in a few more one-to-one visits, but work and his grounding had interfered. Shit, even the concept that he could be grounded chafed. He couldn't go against a direct command, but he sure as hell didn't want to disappoint Josh, either.

Fucked sideways. That's what he was. His only option was to bring Brandon here. Find out one way or another if he could handle all things demonic. One last ride and they'd know for sure. If he passed then everything would be perfect for Josh.

And if he didn't?

Maybe Josh would like a diamond instead. George just bought a nice 101 carat gem from some mortal auction house. And maybe, if he couldn't find the strength to leave Brandon alone, maybe he could give the gift of Brandon for their second anniversary.

* * * *

Brandon lurched awake, throwing himself from the bed, staggering across the floor. Something was wrong. His body burned all over. The twisting heat circled around him brighter and hotter like a tornado of fire.

The floor heaved up under him, throwing him forward. Falling, falling ... what should have taken a second stretched on for minutes. Still he fell, spun about by the terrible fire.

He crashed onto his knees, landing on carved stone tiles in a wash of gold and honey shades. The flames sputtered out around him, trailing tiny sparkling coals off in all directions.

"I'm sorry for the dazzling but uncomfortable entrance." Chance held a hand down to him. "I'm afraid there was no other means of getting you here."

Brandon took the hand and stood, only then realizing he was naked. "Where is 'here'?"

Chance passed him a red satin robe, very much like Chance's black one. "Can't you guess? Place where demons live? Significantly warmer than the average mortal home?" Chance laughed. "Don't look so shocked. *Here* is Hell, or more specifically Abaddon, and no, you aren't dead."

"Why am I here?"

"Because I wanted you here. We have unfinished business you and I. So feel privileged for the invite. Not many mortals get a chance to visit here as a tourist. It breaks a few of our laws and could get me in deep trouble if we get caught."

He couldn't help backing away from the closed door. "What happens to me if we get caught?"

Chance waved off his fear. "Nothing. They'd probably just dump you back in the mortal world. After all, you haven't done anything wrong."

"I suppose I could always say I came to find my mother. I just found out she's some kind of succubus demon." Suddenly he realized, being here in hell, he might be able to find her.

"You mean Synn demon, and you won't find her here, I'm afraid."

Disappointment he hadn't expected rushed through him. "Why not?" Did Chance know her? Was she dead? Had she gone back to the mortal world, leaving them only to be with some other, better family?

"Your mother would be a Tascryn demon, like my own mother. Here in Abaddon, you'll find only Abaddon demons. Before you ask why that matters, trust me. It does. Synn are all about being the good guys, always wrapped up in a dozen different rolls of morality red tape. She won't be here because the Synn are too good for here, and wouldn't exactly be welcome if they did deign to visit."

So he wouldn't be able to meet his mother...

"Not this time. If you want, I might be able to get word to her, arrange a visit in your world."

His emotions whirled. Meeting his mother, who was a "good guy," and finding out more about himself and her and all that might have gone wrong ... it sounded good, good enough to wait for. "Ah ... okay then. Why am I here again?"

Chance pulled him close until their noses were almost brushing. "I have been restricted to this plane of existence. I couldn't come to you, so I brought you to me. It's time to see if you will sink or swim."

Fear warred with anticipation, both pushing aside thoughts of the mother he'd never known. What would the test be? "Whatever you command, whatever it takes ... I'll prove myself."

"As much as I want to see you naked and kneeling before Josh, tonight will not be so simple. Tonight will be about you taking control and proving this is what you want. Proving I am what you want." Chance fell onto his silk covered bed, stretched out, flames tickling over the blood red sheets. "Let the games begin."

The wicked gleam in Chance's eyes was so perfectly him that Brandon couldn't help laughing at the demon. The fear of failure faded as his heart pounded onward faster and faster. "You know when we started this, I never could have envisioned this day."

"Oh? I certainly had doubts myself."

Brandon dropped the satin robe to the floor, stepping boldly toward the waiting demon, his waiting demon. "I still have questions, but somehow you eased in past my fear. I don't know how you managed to do that." Crawling across the bed, he knelt beside Chance and stroked his red and gold hair back from his elegant face. For once the hair was more gold than red. The flames that danced there added a warm caress over his hand with each motion.

In the past visits he'd seen Chance look dangerous, sexy, haggard, and out of control, but never before had he looked so relaxed, so comfortable in his own skin ... and flames. How could he forget the flames? "I don't even see your flames. Not like before anyhow."

"What do you see now?"

What did he see? Chance, he just saw Chance and nothing more. "You. I see you now."

"Not a demon? Not a threat to your soul?"

He let the silky hair thread through his fingers, amazed how the flames danced over his hands, but never burned him. "I'm not sure I even have a soul, so how could you be a danger to it?"

"Why wouldn't you have a soul? Demons have them. The only ones who don't are vampires."

"Vampires? I thought those were myth."

"Real, but pretty rare in the grand scheme of things."

"Oh." Something to ask about later. "So I have a soul. Does that make you a threat?" Even as he asked the question, he knew the answer. Of course it didn't. Chance was still Chance. "I didn't mean—"

"Of course not. But you know so little about demons that there are more questions than answers. You don't even know why we exist or what we do for day jobs."

Brandon shook his head. Now wasn't the time, but he had so many questions it was all he could do not to ask.

Chance answered anyhow. "For me, I lead a small group of demons to do Last Chance visits, like I did for Josh. You might consider it a wake up call for people not happy with their lives. But enough about me, at least for now. Later you can ask all you want. I don't have to send you back right away. If you want, we have all night."

Since it was more than he'd expected, Brandon pushed the rest of his questions aside. For now, he had a very sexy demon waiting for him to make a move. Did he have the courage?

Yeah, he did. His body was awake and making its needs perfectly clear. He wanted Chance, wanted to fuck him. No,

more than that, he wanted to make love to him. It was time to thank Chance. He'd done far more than offer an opportunity to be with Josh. The demon had saved him from the unknown, given him a gift of self that he'd never before had.

His stroking fingers tightened, holding Chance in place while he leaned in to claim a kiss. They came together with a warm flare of contact. Chance's soft lips opened at once, inviting him deeper. Arms came around him careful to pet and caress but not force him closer. He smiled against Chance's kiss. The demon was being too careful. He wasn't going to break.

Deepening the kiss, he took control, showing Chance it was okay to need more. He was ready.

Pushing the demon back, he knelt between his spread thighs, sinking both hands into Chance's mane to anchor them together. The heat and flames burst up around them. Chance's robe sizzled away, leaving nothing but bare skin between them. The push of Chance's erection was insistent, but this time it would be denied. This time he wanted to fill Chance up. At least this first time ... Later maybe might be very different. But then ... did Chance even want to be bottom?

Stupid question!

He pulled back. "I guess that's a yes." He focused on chasing the flames across Chance's shoulder with a trail of nibbles. Stroking one hand down Chance's side, he corralled the huge erection, claiming it in one hand. Rubbing the head, he gathered the slick precome and caressed the length with

the moisture. The twitching surge from Chance was a reward, but not enough.

Chance's hands landed on his arms, countering the rocking of hips that ground them together.

The angle pushed his cock right between Chance's ass cheeks. The sensation was perfect, slick and tight. He moaned at the pressure rushing through his body. Back and forth he rolled his hips, rubbing his weeping desperate erection across Chance's entrance.

"You're slick with synn. Don't wait," Chance growled.

Damn handy demon trait to have inherited. He didn't want to wait, either. He angled his cock, rubbing, pressing the head to Chance's hole. Dipping in with short hard strokes, he teased the entrance until Chance bucked in frustration. Then he thrust deep while his hand continued to ride Chance's cock in fierce tight strokes. On and on, he claimed him, fucked him, loved him, until the sensation was stronger than his control.

His hips swung in hard strokes. His hand nearly pulsed with Chance's rising pleasure. The flames around them were dark red, near black with not a lick of gold.

Chance arched up under him, breath caught, body lost to the orgasm. His beautiful expression of ultimate release left Brandon in awe, and still for the course of several heartbeats. Then his emotions caught fire, rushing him onward to his own release.

Two more strokes and he joined his lover, sagging over Chance in satisfaction he hadn't felt in a long time. It wasn't

just sex anymore. It was more. Love and acceptance, wrapped in a red and gold demon.

Chance was just as overwhelmed. Brandon had made love to him like he was the only soul in the world. Loved him deeply, fully, completely. Not for Josh, but for himself. Brandon passed the test with flying colors. The games were nothing less than a complete success.

Chance held Brandon in a tight embrace, brushing a kiss over one sweat slick temple. "Shall I send you home, or would you like to spend the night?"

Without hesitation, Brandon answered, "Stay. I want to stay."

Chance smiled. Now all that remained was finding the right bow for Brandon, who he had no doubt would be the perfect gift for Josh. The kind he could give and never give up. What could possibly be better?

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L. Shannon

L. Shannon, the author, came into existence in June of 2004. Shannon's always been a reader and lover of books, but never considered writing until one night when she ran out of books to read ... She began writing that very night as the first line of defense in a battle against insomnia. Her writing has steadily grown into a full-out war against reality. Her friends kindly say reality never stood a chance.

Shannon's novels have expanded to fill an entire world with paranormal wonders including Valàfrn werewolves, Tascryn demons, blood-sucking vampires, sexy selkies and many, many more. Be careful if you choose to enter Shannon's hunk-filled world. You may never wish to leave...

In the time Shannon doesn't spend writing, she's kept busy by bothering her husband, showing dogs, gardening and watching over her four Butterfly Koi ponds. You can learn more about her writing and her life at www.lshannon.net