



*Moon Shadows:*  
*Dangerous Moonlight*  
*By*  
*Angela Castle*

## **Dangerous Moonlight by Angela Castle**

---

This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are products of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously and are not to be construed as real. Any resemblance to actual events, locales, organizations, or persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental.

### **Dangerous Moonlight**

Copyright© 2010 Angela Castle

ISBN: 978-1-60088-611-9

Cover Artist: Cris Griffin

Editor: Stephanie Parent

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be used or reproduced electronically or in print without written permission, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in reviews.

Cobblestone Press, LLC

[www.cobblestone-press.com](http://www.cobblestone-press.com)

## **Dedication**

Thank you, Sharyn, who knows all my writing flaws.

Thank you to the gorgeous, sexy man who inspired my hero. True  
heroes really do exist!

Thank you to my family and friends who help me work out my  
plots and listen to me go on and on about my characters.

## **Chapter One**

“Aaaaahhhhhh. Oh God that feels good! Don’t stop!”

If Neman had a choice, he never would. He slammed his thick cock into the woman’s willing body over and over. At no time in all his existence had a woman felt so good around him. Every lush, pale curve, every dip and hollow of her body was a potent aphrodisiac that even the gods themselves could not duplicate. Bending down, taking a full, dusty pink nipple into his mouth, he sucked in time with his fierce thrusts. She curled her legs around him and tilted her hips to take more of him. Neman responded by pushing her legs higher, angling his hips to hit home deeper within her.

It wasn’t like Neman to take advantage of an intoxicated potential victim of a Gorlon Kat demon—so what the hell was wrong with him for doing just that? And why, in all his existence, did it feel so right...?

*Fifteen minutes earlier...*

Neman thought her totally mad when he found her in the alleyway, trying to befriend the creature from the Lower Realms. It was stalking toward her; its red glowing eyes would have alerted any sane person to the fact that this was not an alley cat. With a distorted black body twisting on its four deadly claws, its thickly muscled form was like that of a large jaguar.

"Heeerrre kitty, kitty, come to Mummy."

Her slurred words alerted him to her drunken state. He had been tracking this demon across several different continents after it had viciously killed a string of middle-aged women. Neman jumped from the roof of the tavern building—a two-story drop—and landed directly in the demon's path, drawing his lightweight, custom-made scimitar.

"Crikey, it's raining men!" the woman said from behind him.

Neman didn't have time to deal with her; he never took his eyes off the demon. It hissed, turned its back on him, crouched low and then leapt up over the tavern wall. Neman was about to give chase when the woman stepped up behind him, grabbing onto the sleeve of his long black leather coat.

"Where'd my kitty go? You scared him away!"

Her intoxicating vanilla and strawberry scent hit him, stunning him. As Neman turned towards her, she stumbled and he caught her with one arm. Like dragon's fire the heat of her body pressed against his, sending a shock through his system.

The wavy-haired, lushly curved brunette was certainly not the

## Dangerous Moonlight by Angela Castle

---

prettiest or thinnest woman he'd ever beheld, yet she had eyes like the first morning sky, pale blue, with a smattering of freckles across a pert little nose and deep, pouty pink lips.

"You!" As she poked a pale pink-painted fingernail into his chest, her other hand found his cock through his expensive black tailored leather pants. She squeezed and almost had him coming on the spot. "You are going to turn my night from the worst one of my life into the best."

"How do you wish me to do that, my lady?" Purring like a man who'd just discovered the greatest treasure under the heavens, Neman allowed his hands to roam down her perfectly sized back to a heart-shaped ass any man would die happy to pound into. Neman was having a good mind to do just that.

She looked very serious as she said, "I want to be fucked until I can't walk, talk or do anything at all. Got a problem with that?"

Neman sheathed his sword and swung her up in his arms. "Not at all, sweetness—I do like a woman who knows what she wants."

"Paint me green and pickle me whole! I got a He-man! You're not going to break your back or something?"

Neman laughed. "No, sweetness, you're lighter than a moonbeam; where do you live?"

"Can't go home, man—whore of Babylon in there."

Neman didn't even want to know what that meant; he was Sumerian, not Babylonian.

Anchoring her hands around his neck, she bent her head to lick the skin of his neck. Neman groaned.

"Mmmmmmm, you do taste like chocolate."

## Dangerous Moonlight by Angela Castle

---

He had to get them out of this dark alley, before he pushed her up against the wall and took her like a primitive savage. If Neman was not impulsive, what the hell was he doing? The roller-coaster had started, and he felt there was no way to end it until he was seated fully inside of her. Summoning his powers, he gripped her tightly. "Hang on, sweetness; we're going to my place." With a fizzle of energy in the air and a "pop," he landed in the center of his Zigg.

"Yippee, that was fun. Let's do that again!"

Her wide blue eyes thrilled with the ride of teleportation that scared the shit out of most mortals. Well, she was drunk. He set her on her feet. She smacked her lush pink lips together before wetting them with the tip of her tongue, firing his blood even more.

"Right, let's rumba." Her hands gripped each side of his expensive long black leather jacket, tugging him down; she kissed him hard on the mouth, her hot little tongue pushing into his mouth.

Gripping the back of her neck, Neman groaned again. Damn, if he wasn't in control of one situation, at least he would control how he kissed her. Everything about this woman called to him, cried out for him to touch her, to have her naked beneath him. He slid his fingers up into her hair, angling her mouth before pushing her tongue back deeply and drinking her down like a starving man. She tasted of strawberries and vanilla, more potent than any liquor she had consumed.

Feeling like a clumsy youth he, tore at her clothes. He desperately needed to have her naked. Neman growled and snatched her up in his arms, taking the stairs two steps at a time. She laughed and tugged at his clothes. They crashed through the bedchamber door; Neman paused only briefly to slam it shut and flick on the security switch before taking her across the room and tossing her onto his bed. He tore at her clothes, until she was in nothing but dark blue panties and bra. He ripped the flimsy material from her, tossing the remnants aside, to bask in all her naked



## **Dangerous Moonlight by Angela Castle**

---

glory. She had wondrously creamy skin—every lush dip and hollow begged to be licked and explored with his fingers and tongue. Her breasts were so full, more than even a king deserved. Dark areolas with pink tight nipples to be suckled and teased; she had a body made for love. Neman wanted to drown himself in her.

“Wow, you are a He-man!” she exclaimed with a breathless little pant. “I love strong men; Larry ain’t strong.”

Neman growled. He didn’t want to hear another man’s name on her lips. “I am Neman.”

“Wonderful, now I know whose name to scream when you fuck me!”

“Will be a pleasure to hear.” His weapons went flying to the ground with a clatter, quickly followed by the rest of his clothes and boots. He could have taken the easy way to undress but didn’t wish to startle her. “What be your name, my lady?”

“Vanessa, but my friends call me Nessa.” Her gaze scanned over his body, eyes widening with obvious delight before lowering to his sizable cock. She licked her lips, looking absolutely ecstatic at what she saw. “Holy cow, look at all that brawn and muscle—you are one hunk-a-licious! Oh baby, you are some eye candy. You’re not a man, you’re a god, and tonight you’re all mine!”

Neman chuckled at her awe; she was not far off the mark. He felt a strange sense of masculine pride that she found him attractive. “You, Vanessa, are more beautiful than a goddess, and tonight you are mine.”

“Neman, I want you, I need you, please take me.” Her hands reached out for him.

Unable to deny her, he climbed onto the bed. In one swift movement, he pushed her legs up to his chest and mounted her, pushing

## Dangerous Moonlight by Angela Castle

---

all the way into her in one powerful thrust. Oh gods, it was like entering into paradise, the sheer bliss of her tight inner walls squeezing on his cock. It had been too long since he'd felt a woman this way; this was something he wanted to feel again and again...

*Back in the present...*

"Yessssss, oh, Neman!"

Hearing her scream out her pleasure heightened his own passion, and he was unable to hold back; the force of his release hit him harder than a warlock's spell. Spewing forth into Vanessa's tight, slick passage, Neman was in awe of the powerful encounter with this strangely beautiful woman. Every possessive instinct screamed at him to claim her and not let her go. Her eyes were sleepy and sated.

"Oh, Neman, you've totally blown my mind. No man is ever going to be the same again," she said with a soft sigh.

He watched her body relax. The thought of her with another man was unsettling. Slowly he withdrew from her, instantly missing the hot wet comfort of what felt like home, like a place he belonged. He laid small kisses over her eyes in gratitude.

"I know, sweetness; sleep now." He looked down on the naked mortal he'd just bedded. What craziness had possessed him? He'd never brought a woman into the very depths of his Zigg before. Her staying wasn't an option. She wouldn't retain much of a memory of him in her very inebriated state. This was no place for a human, let alone a tempting siren such as this one. As much as it killed him inside, he knew he could not keep her. He had to find out where she belonged and return her, for her own safety.

## **Dangerous Moonlight by Angela Castle**

---

Neman trailed his hand over her soft skin, and lust flared once again. In his rush to be buried inside her, he had not taken the time to fully taste and explore this wondrous beauty. A smile snaked across his face; he had all night, didn't he? Maybe a little more exploring of her lush body wouldn't do any harm; he would take her home afterward.

## Chapter Two

"Wake-up sleepyhead, wake-up sleepyhead, wake-up sleepyhead, wake-up sleepyheaaaaaaaaaaaaaaddd!" Nessa's arm stumbled out, her hand feeling for the thing that was splitting her head, and she promptly threw her eleven-inch tall, flower-shaped alarm clock out of the open window, giving a satisfied yet painful grin when she heard it shatter into a thousand pieces on the sidewalk two stories below. Whatever possessed her to buy a *Sister Act* alarm clock in the first place was beyond her. Another of her stupid "I like that movie a lot" phases.

A jumbo jet was roaring in her head, her mouth tasted like jet fuel, and she had no memory of what she had done last night. Nessa forced her eyes open; surely it hadn't been that bad if she was home in bed. She pulled off her bed sheet, looking down at her body. Okay, she was naked. Whatever she had done, she prayed to God she hadn't done it in the raw. Unlike an ostrich, she didn't have the head or the ass to hide herself in a hole. Nessa breathed in. *Mmmmm what was that smell?* She sniffed again; it kind of smelled like chocolate. Following her nose, she sniffed at herself. Why did she smell like chocolate? Had she taken a chocolate bath last night? Only in her dreams, dreams of a tall, dark, handsome sword-wielding man, all over her, in her. Nessa sighed out loud. *Oh cripes, even that hurt.* She lay back, closing her eyes; maybe if she went to sleep she'd dream of a chocolate bath and remember it. A loud banging forced her eyes open.

“Oh cripes, go away.”

The banging continued relentlessly, forcing her to grab her sheet off the bed, wrap herself up and trudge to her front door to peer through the view hole. The figure on the other side was tall, dusty blond, slightly muscular, with hazel eyes, impeccably dressed in a pale lemon polo shirt, tan khaki pants, and continental loafers.

“Yoohoo, honey? Are you in there?”

Nessa yanked open the door, clamping her hand over her best friend’s mouth before he uttered another word. “Shhhh, even the walls make noise,” she whispered and winced.

Darren pulled her hand from his mouth, barging past her into the small apartment and through into her kitchen. Nessa followed.

“Well, coffee and aspirin are a surefire cure for a hangover, honey. I was worried about you last night—you didn’t answer your phone. Is he gone?”

“Who?”

“Oooh, aaaah, oh yeah baby! Larry.” The full force of last night hit Nessa; she sat down on the chair, feeling sicker than the hangover she already had.

“Oh, now I remember—the worst day of my life.”

Darren sat down and patted her arm. “I wouldn’t say the worst day; remember last year’s work picnic?”

“Shut up, Darren. You’re not helping.”

“Hey do you smell chocolate?” Darren started sniffing the air, his nose getting increasingly closer to her body.

"Darren, you know I love you, but will you please stop sniffing me?"

"You smell like chocolate."

"I know."

"And you're wearing a sheet."

"I know."

"Why are you wearing a sheet?"

"Because I woke up naked, okay?"

"So why do you smell like chocolate?" He looked her up and down.

"I don't know. I can't remember much past drinking in some tavern last night; maybe I ate a whole candy store."

"Uh huh. Do you know you have the biggest hickey I've ever seen on your neck?"

"What?" Nessa jumped up and ran into her bathroom to check her neck in the full-length mirror. True to Darren's words, along her neck was a purple bruise. Curious, she pulled down the sheet to study the rest of her body; what could only be teeth marks ran all down her body and breasts. There was a small tattoo on the right side of her hip. Two triangles faced each other, and running through each was a red circle.

"Oh my God, how did I get those?"

"I'm guessing it wasn't fancy-pants Larry," Darren said from behind her. "Got lucky and laid last night, did we? Even drunk, at least you could have come up with a more imaginative tattoo."

Nessa re-covered her body. "I don't remember getting a tattoo; it

## Dangerous Moonlight by Angela Castle

---

doesn't hurt, though." Giving the mark a rub through the sheet, she said, "Everything from last night is nothing but a fuzzy blur...and a cat."

"A cat?"

"What are you, a bloody parrot?" Nessa gripped her head; it was pounding away. "I don't know what I'm talking about."

Darren gave her a sympathetic hug. "Have a shower. I'll make some coffee—it'll help clear your head. But I must say, I do like that chocolate smell you have going."

"Get out." Nessa pushed Darren to the bathroom door.

"All right, bossy boots." He closed the door and started singing the show tune from *Oklahoma*, "I'm just a girl who can't say no..."

Groaning, Nessa turned on the shower, hoping to drown out the sound of her overly happy best friend clattering around in her kitchen. She stepped into the cold spray to help ease some of the aches in her body, pressing her head against the cool tiles.

Getting home from work early the previous day, Nessa had opened the door to find her boyfriend of six months, naked, bending the equally naked, skinny next-door neighbor, aptly named Bunny, over the sofa and rooting her like a rabbit. Nessa had supported him to help his acting career take off, and she'd thought she loved him. *Note to self: burn sofa first chance I get.* He had calmly kept fucking Bunny while saying, with a stupid grin on his face, "Hey baby, wanna join in? I always wanted a three-way."

Humiliated, Nessa's temper flared. "Get your lazy non-working, lying, cheating ass out of my place and take your fucking rabbit with you! Or I'll shove a red-hot poker so far up your ass you won't be able to sit down for the rest of your natural scum-ridden life!"

Nessa had screamed, spun on her heels and ran back down the stairs. She kept walking, stubbornly swiping at the tears streaming down her face while trying desperately to contact her best friend on her mobile to tell him what her cheating, now ex-boyfriend had done; but she only got his voicemail. Darren must have worked a double shift.

She had no idea how far she walked until coming upon a tavern. Nessa had gone into the bar to drink herself into oblivion, her drink of choice being Strawberry Snaps and Vanilla Dreams, sweet, smooth and very alcoholic. The night had merged into nothing but a fragmented blur. Nessa swore she'd seen a cat, and a hunk-a-luscious man with the most amazing golden eyes. Yes, golden eyes—or at least she'd remembered something. Nessa looked down at the marks on her body. Maybe her dream hunk wasn't a dream after all. Great! She'd met the man of her dreams and couldn't even remember who he was or what they did. From the evidence, they had done a great deal; just her rotten luck.



*Three days later...*

Neman paced; he couldn't get her out of his head. He recalled every detail of her body, her pale blue eyes, her strawberry and vanilla scent that maddened him. He had left her in her apartment in the early hours of the morning, after finding her purse back in the alley with her ID—Vanessa Myles. Just thinking about her had him hard and frustrated. There had been no trace of the demon he'd been tracking for the past month; Vanessa was just the candidate for that demon. It had already left a trail of bodies in its wake, women just like *his* Vanessa. He shook his head. It was dangerous to think of her like that. One consolation of the hunt was that he'd stopped the demon from taking another victim for now; instead she'd ended up a victim of his own lust.

He shook his head, throwing another dagger at the target board in his training room. It hit the target dead on. It should never have happened, yet more than anything he wanted it to happen again. Three days of continual hunting and hard physical workouts in an attempt to forget the encounter with his Vanessa, but still he was mentally and physically frustrated. "Damn it all to hell."

"Someone's in a good mood; not get your Gorlan Kat demon yet, Neman?"

"What do you want, Slazzamar?" Neman stalked across the room, wrenching each blade from the worn target board, not bothering to look at the half elf/half demon creature leaning against his weapons cage. Slazzamar served as messenger and general liaison and spy between the Realms; he was often more trouble than he was worth, as no secret worth keeping could ever be kept by him. But he had often brought Neman news or the whereabouts of particular demons he was hunting. Neman had saved the elf's life once, after he had gotten into a fight with a Shadow demon he'd been sent to gather information on. Ever since, Slazzamar had

## Dangerous Moonlight by Angela Castle

---

popped in and out at random, thinking he was repaying Neman with tidbits of information he had gleaned from the Lower, Outer and Human Realms.

"I have recently come across a luscious piece of information that you're just going to love. It seems the Lower and Outer Realms are buzzing about a prophecy that is about to take place."

"I don't care for prophecies and less for rumors, unless you know where the Gorlon Kat demon is."

"If I knew that, then it wouldn't be a rumor, but fact."

"All the better. Now piss off before I need another target for my board."

Slazzamar glanced at the shredded *Supernatural* poster. Everyone who was anyone knew that Neman never missed, and to never get in the way of his blades. "Wait a minute, you let it get away? The mighty demon hunter let his quarry get away?"

"I had to rescue a helpless human woman." What the hell was he doing defending his actions to Slazzamar?

"Was she pretty, this helpless human woman? Did she reward you properly for her rescue?" Slazzamar twitched his pointed ears before smoothing back his long white hair.

"If you know what's good for you, Slazzamar, you'll keep your trap shut." But that was just the problem—he never did.

"I love humans; so frail, so fuckable."

Neman swiveled on his booted heel in a movement quicker than any mortal eye could see. He'd embedded the six throwing daggers deeply into the target board. Each dagger had landed directly on the faces of the actors on the poster pinned on his target board, destroying the

fragile paper in the process. His anger flared as he turned on Slazzamar. "State what you want, then get out."

"Hey, don't kill the messenger. I don't go demanding payment—my services come free of charge." Slazzamar held up his hands. "I just thought you might want to know that the prophecy contained info about the 'Chosen One'—you know, the being of great power that is destined to heal the fractures between the Realms and bring peace."

"That is hardly news, Slazzamar." Neman picked two long sabers from his weapons rack and tossed one toward Slazzamar, who caught the hilt. That prophecy had been going around for the last four thousand years about a prince being strong and powerful enough to send the demons back, and to stop more demons leaking out of the Lower Hell Realms by sealing the fracture that allowed them to seep through into both the Human and Outer Realms. The Outer Realms had been warring with the Lower Realms ever since and had barely been able to keep the demons at bay. The fracture accounted for most of the demons Neman had to track and kill in the Human Realm, the Realm in which he also dwelt.

"Spar with me, and I may decide not to kill you for bringing me useless information."

"Where are your slaves today?" Slazzamar jumped to his feet. Despite his frail, skinny frame, Slazzamar was deceptively nimble and strong.

"Mark and Mona have the week off, and I've told you before they are not my slaves." Neman lunged to attack, feeling the need to beat the crap out of something to help improve his glum mood over not having Vanessa.

"Touchy—you're in a worse mood than I've ever seen you." Slazzamar jumped out of the way, deflecting his blow. "Since when has my information been useless? Oh, you're going to love this one. It's a real,

as the humans, say 'doozy.'"

"Stop fucking about and tell me," Neman responded, jumping forward and swinging his blade in quickly. Slazzamar caught it with his own blade, pushing Neman back.

"The whole Lower Realm and all the demon rulers are in a panic; a woman is pregnant with this great 'prince,' and now the race is on to find her and kill her and the child before it's born."

"Who is the woman?" Curiosity got the better of Neman.

"Isn't that the mystery everyone will kill to find out. You'd better roll out your welcome mat, Neman, because they're on their way to you."

Neman frowned, lowering his sword. "What do I have to do with this?"

Slazzamar gave a laugh that made Neman's blood run cold.

"You really should brush up on your prophecies, Neman. For an ex-god and demon hunter you really are thick."

Neman growled, taking a menacing step towards the half elf/half demon.

"I am still a god, Slazzamar, so unless you want to move to the top of my hit list, spill it."

"You're the Daddy, Daddy-O."

Neman snorted. "Ridiculous, there is no way..." Neman stopped midsentence, suddenly thinking of Vanessa. His idiocy was now complete. He hadn't even thought of such a thing while his naked cock had felt so good sliding into her unprotected wet heat. Damn. The way he'd been unable to resist her...she'd been anointed by the gods, a potent ointment known to be stronger than even Cupid's arrow tip.

"You know who she is, don't you?" Slazzamar stepped forward, ears twitching at the information.

Neman grabbed the creature by his black skull-and-cross-bone T-shirt, lifting him off his feet. "I want to see the scrolls."

"Bring your reading glasses, old man." Slazzamar gripped Neman's shoulders, immediately feeling the energy building before the electric sizzle and "pop."

Neman looked around at the dimly lit archives of the Ancients. What did that make him? These archives were set up just before his time. Every modern scholar on earth would sell their souls to see the wealth of knowledge contained in these scrolls, tomes, tablets and books. Not surprisingly, Neman saw the bright flickering of computers down the far end of one hall.

The long marbled hall stretched on for miles. Neman could feel the powerful spells that hovered through the air, protecting the library from anyone or any creature who wanted to destroy it. But it was too valuable a source of information for all races for them to want to. It also served as neutral territory for warring races, Realms and any others who had disputes that needed to be resolved.

Slazzamar had managed to untangle himself from Neman's grip during the teleport. Not that he could harm him in here.

Neman lowered his sword, knowing it was useless, and glared at Slazzamar. "Well?"

"Patience, Neman, patience." Slazzamar strolled casually down the hall as if he owned the place, and Neman followed.

Neman had spent many years in this place searching for a way to regain his stolen powers, when his own relatives had refused to help. He wanted vengeance on the demon who had not only stolen his powers, but

his whole life. Already skilled with a blade, Neman was forced to rely on his immortality and strength. He had learned quickly, developing into a skilled and deadly warrior. He had thrown what was left of his life into hunting down and killing demons.

Hooking a left turn into an older part of the archives, they walked past wall-to-wall stone shelving with scrolls and clay tablets haphazardly stacked. At the end of the room was a long stone table with scrolls laid out and opened.

"These were translated from tablets a while back." Slazzamar pointed to one of the scrolls. It was suspiciously laid out; no doubt it had been read recently by others.

Neman closed in, staring down at the opened scroll, the language as familiar to him as his own breath—Sumerian. "This was written after my fall," Neman muttered, skimming over the words and noting the date—right between the fall of Sumeria and the rise of Assyria.

"Well, it was written by Armod."

Neman realized that Armod had been a priest in his temple. But Neman still could not believe that he was to be the father of the prophesied "prince" who in theory had to be powerful enough to seal a fracture as great as the one between the Realms. Only a very powerful god could do something like that; not that any had ever tried or bothered to do such a thing.

*Fallen god of Ur shall rise again to sow his seed in the womb of the willing mortal, precious is she chosen to greatness. The moons shall shine brightly in his eyes. And the prince shall be brought forth, strong with the power to unite the things under the heavens and earth. What is torn shall be made whole, what is broken shall be mended. Beyond all earthy planes.*

"Firstly, I'm not a fallen god, and my powers were stolen; secondly, there is no date or timeline here, and how the heck does anyone know that

a woman is pregnant with this supposed 'prince'?"

"Keep reading, Sherlock." Slazzamar leaned against the ancient stone table.

*Chosen, marked, anointed is she, by her mark shall she be chosen. Stone of knowledge will shine like the stars, the moon glow in the season of the Chosen One, she shall bring forth the prince. Great peril, great evil awaits her. Beware, beware the evil ones who seek to destroy. Now is the time of her beauty, now is the time to heal all things. Beware if the God of Summer fails, darkness shall forever fall. Under the heavens, over the lands, over seas, over every kingdom evil will reign to the end of time.'*

Typically cryptic, but Neman got the main meaning. Anyone who wanted to retain any semblance of power in the Lower Realm would be after a helpless pregnant woman. Doom and gloom for everyone if the prophecy wasn't fulfilled.

"Fuck!"

"Oh, I think that part is already over." Slazzamar grinned evilly. "There are a few bits and pieces missing, but you get the gist of it. They have already been looking for her, Neman; I suggest you find her before they do. Personally, I don't want darkness over all the lands—there's enough shit to deal with as it is." Slazzamar crossed his arms over his chest.

Neman knew he was right—he had to find her again before the demons did. But how could he have missed this? This prophecy was just as much about him and this woman as about this "prince" being created to bring peace. It was another pathetic way the gods amused themselves and palmed responsibility off onto others.

Neman's anger flared. Vanessa was an innocent; as much as she had been created to bring forth a prophecy, Neman realized she had been created just for him.

## **Dangerous Moonlight by Angela Castle**

---

Neman looked up and turned toward the glowing Stone of Knowledge on the table. His shoulders sagged; they were both in it, whether they liked it or not. But first he would have to find out if she was this Chosen One; second, if he had impregnated her. Only then would he truly believe it.



### **Chapter Three**

“Hi Frank, what’s your torment today? Salmonella Special or drop-dead pork rolls?” The bald-headed, middle-aged, potbellied janitor, who had ears that made him look like a taxi cab with both doors open, was clearly unimpressed with Nessa’s humorous take on the cafeteria food.

“I’m going for the heart-clogging, artery-hardening chips, covered in extra salt and sauce!” she said, cheerily reaching over him to help herself to the tray of chips and pile them on her plate.

She’d had a weird craving for fatty chips all day and was now indulging that craving. Mercy General Hospital in Sydney was known to have the worst food in the vicinity. Staff knew that if you cared for your health, you brought your own lunch from home. But today a headache had made Nessa sleep in later than she’d intended; now she was without

## Dangerous Moonlight by Angela Castle

---

her alarm clock. *Note to self: buy new alarm clock. Second note to self: don't get a hangover and throw it out the window again.*

With her fries smothered in tomato sauce, she weaved her way through the peak-lunch-hour-crowded tables. Darren was waving at her from a table in the far corner, so she made a beeline for it.

"Gracious, girl, you want to end up a patient here?" Darren grimaced at her suffocating chips as she slid into the chair opposite.

"I slept in. So sue me."

"I'll go get the coronary paddles ready after lunch." Darren pulled out his perfect tuna and salad lunch. Nessa rolled her eyes.

"Not everyone is as perfect as you." She shook her head. "You know, I don't know what it is, but I've had the weirdest morning on record. I'm all achey, I swear my abdomen is swollen, my breasts hurt and I didn't drink a drop last night. I've been starving all day long, and yet I've eaten everything in sight."

"Uh-huh. Well, those aren't going to help; it sounds like you're premenstrual, honey."

Nessa tossed several fries into her mouth, chewing them thoughtfully. "Gee, thanks, Mum. But I know it can't be that; maybe I'm just coming down with something."

"Only you would punish yourself by coming into work sick." Darren stuck his fork into his salad.

"Well, I don't want to stick around the apartment in case idiot Larry turns up; I got rid of his junk only yesterday."

Darren gave a chuckle. "Took you long enough. So is it in a pile outside the apartment?"

## Dangerous Moonlight by Angela Castle

---

"And litter Sydney with more useless junk? Please, I like to think of myself as an environmentalist; it's in the dumpster out the back."

Darren studied her for a long moment. "You're looking kind of pale, honey. Maybe you should go home." He slipped a fork full of tuna into his mouth.

Nessa licked the sauce off her fingers. She and Darren had been friends for six years and counting, ever since Nessa had gotten her job in Medical Records, a.k.a. "the dungeon" of the hospital. Darren, a nurse in the ER department, had strode in with a pile of records for her to file. Darren had picked up on her quirky sense of humor, and she had made instant friends with the seriously gay nurse. Ever since, they had shared many ups and downs, date disasters, girls' nights in, and out on the town—after all, they both had similar taste in men.

"Maybe I should just give up on men altogether and buy myself a cat." She sighed.

"Don't you bloody well dare; I'm allergic to cats."

"No you're not."

"Oh yes I am—I'm especially allergic to single women with cats." Darren dodged the chip Nessa threw at him. "I haven't given up on love yet, and I'm not about to let you give up either."

Nessa smiled fondly at her friend. "Thanks, Darren. What would I do without you?"

The two friends finished their usual lunchtime break before heading back to their designated workstations.

"Back to the dungeon again." Nessa sighed, fatigue setting in.

"Nurse Manny is off again—I have to work a double tonight."

## Dangerous Moonlight by Angela Castle

---

"No rest for the wicked, eh. I'll see you tomorrow then?" Nessa turned, when a sudden wave of dizziness hit her. "Darren!" she managed to croak out before her view of the world tilted, descending into darkness.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Am I in Hell?" Nessa cracked her eyes open, seeing Darren's worried face hovering above her.

"If Hell is Mercy Hospital ER, then sure, honey."

"What happened?"

"Casper has nothing on how white you went before taking a vertical nap. You've been out for a good hour; the docs have run a few tests. I told them you were stressed from a recent break-up, but Nessa, they found something else as well."

Nessa swallowed with sudden worry. "Please tell me they found out I was switched at birth and am really the daughter of a wealthy billionaire."

"If only we were all that lucky. Nessa, there's no easy way to tell you, and better coming from me than Dr. Deranged out there."

"Will you just tell me?"

"Honey, you're pregnant."

"Pregnant?" Nessa repeated, as if she hadn't heard the word in her life before.

"Yes, you are pregnant."

"What do you mean I'm pregnant!" Nessa's voice boarded on the hysterical.

"Up the duff, bun in the oven, with child, expecting, knocked up."

"Thank you, Mr. Walking Thesaurus!" Nessa snapped.

"Honey, I'm always here to help...ooh, I'm going to be an uncle." He clapped his hands together excitedly.

"You're a pain in the ass."

"Oh God, I hope so. Have you seen the new doctor on staff? Mmmmm-mmm, scrumptious, I'd like to be the pain in his ass."

Nessa sat up, grabbing onto Darren's white uniform. "Darren, there is no way I can be pregnant. I was told I was sterile."

"Well, sweetie, you've just proved that every medic you saw is a quack, unlike me, a true professional, so..." Darren leaned in closer. "Who's the lucky daddy?"

Still not believing it possible, Nessa could only think of one candidate.

"Oh God, it can't be Larry." She groaned, covering her eyes with her hand.

"The knucklehead I'll-bone-anything-that-breathes Larry? It's only been three days since you caught him doing I'll-fuck-anyone-who-has-two-dollars-slut-neighbor."

"I know, but it's been three weeks since we had sex, and we always used condoms—Larry insisted on it. Auntie Flow visited just last week!"

Darren gave a gasp of horror.

"A three-week dry spell? Oh honey. Well, condoms aren't

foolproof, as you now know, and you can still get bleeding spots when you're pregnant."

"Oh God, this can't be happening." Nessa dropped her head into her hands.

Darren sighed. "Honey, I'll go get an ultrasound ordered for you ASAP. The doctor can determine when the little miracle was conceived. In the meantime, go home and get some rest."

"Darren?" Nessa grabbed her best friend's hand, panic suddenly gripping her. "You won't abandon me, will you?"

"You kidding, Nessa? I'm stuck on you like glue, honey. We'll get through this and raise the little hellion together. Big Uncle Darren, hmm...I like the sound of that."

Nessa smiled. "Thanks, Darren, you're the best."

"Oh, I know—just make sure you spread that knowledge around a bit more. I can't get pregnant, but I can sure have fun trying." He gave her a Darren-knows-best grin. "Off with you now. I'll come by and check on you when I knock off work tonight."

Nessa climbed down from the examination table and gave him a hug.

*Deep in the bowels of the Lower Realm...*

Cowering, Fernos of Gorlan inclined his head, simpering toward his mistress. His skin still sizzled from the scorching blow she had landed on him in her rage. Jezebel, Great Demoness and queen of her domain, flicked back her silken dark green robe that shimmered in the dimly lit

cavern.

“You let a potential Chosen One live!” Jezebel screeched. She did not like raising her voice, and doing so enraged her all the more. “I give you one simple task, and you can’t even complete that! I should kill you where you stand.”

Ever since one of her informants had told her that the time of the Chosen One was drawing near, she had decided to make a preemptive strike and kill this supposed Chosen One before the prophecy could come to pass and end her plans for domination of the Outer and Human Realms. Using the possible age and description of a mortal woman that may have been Chosen, she’d sent out Fernos, one her most vicious tracking demons, to kill her. She didn’t care if any innocents were killed in the process; they were only casualties of the cause, her cause.

“Mercy, my Queen; allow me one more chance to prove my worth. Many women have already died by my claws; any of those could have been the Chosen One. My Queen, prophecies are always unclear. It was not guaranteed that she was the right one.”

Jezebel swiveled on her dais, glaring at Gremlock, her second-in-command—the one she charged to do all her killing when she didn’t feel bothered to take part in the perverse pleasure herself.

“Neman came before I could kill her, my Queen. He has been hunting me,” the Gorlan Kat demon hissed.

“You left her near Neman? Get back there and kill this woman. I don’t care if I have to destroy every last woman on that Earth—I want this Chosen One dead. I will not spare you a second time, Fernos!” She knew if this prophecy came to pass, she’d be out on her ass. Jezebel’s hunger for power and wealth was too great to allow that to happen.

Slazzamar the Sneak came striding into the chamber, stopping just before the stairs of Jezebel’s throne, curiously watching Fernos simper

away. "My Queen." Slazzamar bowed with an overly dramatic sweep of his arm.

"You had better be bringing me good news, Slazzamar."

"Very good, if you are willing to pay." His violet eyes were rimmed with red, and his white hair shimmered down his back.

Jezebel knew his price; it was a small one for his continued information and service to her. So far, his information about the prophecy had proved more valuable than her other network of spies.

"Leave us now." She snapped the order in a tone that no one under her command would dare disobey.

Demons scrambled out like rodents. Slazzamar stayed where he was until the last one had scurried out. He approached her. "I bring news of Neman, and the woman you seek."

Jezebel walked around her throne to the entrance to her chambers. Slazzamar followed.

"It seems the mating has already taken place, and Neman knows the whereabouts of the Chosen One."

"Then my attempt to find the woman before she was implanted has failed. I will now have to destroy her before the child is born." Jezebel was enraged at the failure of her servants.

"That will not be easy, as he has read the prophesied scrolls and knows; no doubt he will protect her until she delivers, and then you're pretty much screwed."

"Then you will find her and report to me; I will see to her destruction. You can name any price, Slazzamar."

The demon elf gave a grin, stepping in closer to her and running



## Dangerous Moonlight by Angela Castle

---

his hand down the side of her arm.

She endured it, as it was a part of the price Slazzamar wanted for his services. Male or female, it didn't matter to this pathetic creature. Slazzamar loved to fuck.

"You know, Jezebel, if Neman ever finds out that you are the one who stole his powers, what's that human expression? 'Your ass will be in a sling.'" He sniffed at her neck as his hands roamed over her ass.

"That is none of your concern, Slazzamar."

"I will find the woman, and I will think about what I want. For now I want you to go over to the bed—I want your ass this time."

Jezebel lifted her skirt and complied with a smile. Slazzamar was a skilled lover, and his touch wasn't that repulsive; after all, she was Jezebel and had not earned her reputation by selling candy to children.

## **Chapter Four**

Sniffing the late-evening air, Neman scented her before he caught sight of her walking down the sidewalk. Tight blue shirt stretched across her beautifully ample breasts, she shifted the paper shopping bags in her arms. The shirt separated from the tight denim miniskirt she wore. As he glimpsed bare midriff, all it took was the smell of her and he wanted her again. To Neman she was a true beauty, the fading sunlight picking up streaks of natural gold and copper in that long wavy hair falling down her back. He remembered the sweet pale thighs wrapped around him as he'd taken her repeatedly. Neman's fingers itched, his mouth watered to taste her again. If he'd had more than his basic powers, he would have been able to sense if she was carrying his child or not. Now he had to find out with more straightforward methods. He wondered if she even knew of the possibility. Neman doubted it, considering how inebriated she had been that night.

## Dangerous Moonlight by Angela Castle

---

He leaned against his Ducati ST3—the bike he had teleported across from the States—as it seemed the best mode of transport to use in these Sydney streets. He pondered his next course of action; if anyone suspected that she could be the “Chosen One,” then he’d have no choice but to protect her. By now Slazzamar would have told anyone and everyone that he knew who the Chosen One was, the little rat bastard.

Neman cursed the fates, understanding the little scent trick they used to make her irresistible. Somewhere along the line they had anointed him. There was no real way to tell how or when—it could have happened anytime, as an anointing could stay with a person, dormant, until they met the one they were anointed for. With Neman’s long history, it could have happened at any time in the past six thousand years. Anger boiled up inside him at being used like this. He would have to have a serious talk with Manuan, God of Fate and Destiny, next time he saw him; though he was a tricky bastard to get hold of, for he always knew when you wanted to see him. Neman turned his attention back to the woman across the street.

An angry expression crossed Vanessa’s face as she stared at a car in one of the parking spaces, before her face morphed into a menacing grin. Swiftly setting down her bags, she rummaged through one. Neman watched curiously as she produced a large potato. She walked around to the back of a red Alpha Camaro and shoved the vegetable up the exhaust pipe, kicking it in deep so it lodged firmly. With a satisfied humph, she collected her bags and went inside the tall apartment block. Neman made a note to himself to keep her away from his cars. The woman was clearly crazy. Pushing away from his bike, Neman followed her inside. Another moment in his life when he didn’t have a plan. As he started up the stairs, a man’s voice rang through the stairwell—he was cursing loudly.

“You stupid fat bitch!” Followed by a loud crash.

Neman’s heart pounded; had someone already found her? Neman raced up the stairs, bursting into her apartment, darting to the side to

avoid a flying glass. Narrowly missing his head, it shattered on the wall behind him. He blinked in confusion. Vanessa seemed to be armed with throwable missiles. A short, skinny man appeared ready to launch himself at her. Neman reacted, grabbing the man before he could jump, pinning him to the wall by his throat. The man's eyes bulged as he clawed at Neman's hand and struggled to breathe.

"Whoa, baby! Where did you come from?" Nessa dropped the objects she was holding.

"Did he harm you?" Neman demanded. "I will kill him without even a second thought if he has dared harm you."

"Hey, Mr. Chippendale, put him down. He may be a lying cheating bastard, but he doesn't deserve to die."

He felt the heat of Vanessa's soft hand on his arm, her electrified touch surging through him. Neman dropped the weasel of a man, and he crumpled to the ground. Neman turned on Vanessa; her blue eyes held concern mixed with a hint of fear. Her close proximity made him want to pull her into his arms, to kiss her breathless. She took a deep breath then, her nostrils flaring, her eyes widening with sudden shock as she hastily backed away from him. It was good to know she was just as affected by him as he was by her.

"Holy crap, you smell like chocolate!"

"Remember me, now do you?" He gave her a seductive smile. "You still smell like strawberries and vanilla."

Blue eyes widening further, she took a hard swallow.

"I'm calling the cops." The weasel had pulled himself to his feet. "Throw both your asses in jail."

Vanessa glanced past him to the weasel. "Larry, get out!" she

yelled, glaring at the man.

"This weasel is your boyfriend?" An unfamiliar surge of jealousy ran through Neman.

"Yes!"

"No!" they both snapped in unison.

"Ex-boyfriend and complete asshole; he was trespassing."

"I came to collect my belongings."

"All of your crappy shit is now out in the dumpster out back," she hissed at the weasel.

"Why you no good, bitc..."

Before he could complete that sentence Neman had him pinned again. Irrational rage boiled to the surface; this man had touched her before he had. Neman was certain no man would ever touch her again—he would see to it.

"You ever insult, look at, or even breathe in her direction again, I know more than a hundred ways to kill you slowly and painfully." Neman grabbed the little weasel by the scruff of the neck, propelling him toward the door, throwing him out before slamming it shut, and sliding the bolt into place.

"What did you ever see in a weasel like that?" Neman turned back to Vanessa.

"A moment of desperate insanity that shall never happen again!" Her gaze swept him from head to toe and back again. He saw awe, wonder and desire in her eyes; taking a step forward, she then retreated.

"I'm not going to hurt you, Vanessa." He kept his tone calm. When

he moved closer in on her she backed up farther, and the back of her legs caught on a white coffee table in the center of the room. Unbalanced, she started to topple backwards. Neman darted forward, catching her before she fell, tugging her securely into his arms. Instantly white-hot desire for her overruled all his other senses; the warmth of her body, the sweetness of her breath coming in rapid little pants, the feeling of her pulse accelerating. One of her hands gripped onto his biceps while the other pressed against his chest, feeling his own rapid heartbeat. He wanted her again, right now.

“Y...you’re the one who left those marks on my...my...”

Neman smiled as she blushed so beautifully. “On your gloriously perfect body. Are they still there, Vanessa? Can I see?” Watching as his husky tone sent a shiver washing over her body, she blinked. The rapid change of expression was amazing to watch.

“Hold the phone! You took advantage of me when I was drunk,” she accused, but made no attempt to struggle or pull out of his arms.

“Sweetness, I do not remember you complaining. Besides, it was you who took advantage of me, I simply went along for the ride, and what a ride it was. A ride I wish to repeat.”

\* \* \* \* \*

What was better than ditching a cheating ex-boyfriend? Revenge sex with the best-looking man on the planet! As he held her in two strong, powerful arms, she could see his muscles bulging beneath the black of his shirt. Oh boy, did it feel good. The drool factor for this guy was off the charts. Move over, Hugh Jackman—this man was beyond beautiful. High masculine cheekbones, strong square jawline, and his chin had a cute little

dimple in the middle. Nessa could easily imagine flicking her tongue over it; she could nibble and explore his face for hours on end. His dark tanned skin had the most ethereal gleam to it, calling her to run her tongue over it, to spend months, even years, simply touching and tasting. Black, shoulder-length, lustrous hair...she itched to run her fingers through it, though they already knew it would feel soft and silken. Nessa's libido was in a tailspin, her nipples reacting as if they already knew him and were begging for a reunion with those sensual masculine lips. Golden eyes that tilted up slightly gave him an extra exotic aura, a touch of the dark and dangerous barely suppressed below the surface. Those eyes she remembered—golden eyes that looked at her as if she were his next meal to devour. Nessa cleared her throat, making some attempt to clear her lust-drunken brain.

“You know, I’m not drunk anymore.” *Who cares? Kiss him, lick him, touch him!*

“Even better—this time you will remember everything we do.” *Yippee!* both body and mind chimed in. Nessa swallowed at his sensual promise. He had a slight accent that Nessa couldn't quite place.

“I don't even know you.” *Shut up, stupid brain!* Her body screamed to be reacquainted with the sexiest man on the globe. He chuckled; he smelled oh so good. Now she knew where that chocolate smell had come from. If ever she'd had a new addiction, it was him all over her. Oh, she wanted to be covered in it again. But there was something else nagging at the back of her still-functioning brain.

“Why did you come back? I mean, there may have been no chance of me ever remembering you.”

“Would you believe that I could not stop thinking about you?” She didn't believe it, and that was the problem—what god-like man really wanted a plump, plain girl like her? Though the look in his eyes said he did.

## Dangerous Moonlight by Angela Castle

---

"Only if you had Post-it notes stuck on your forehead with my name on it. Okay, so I'm an easy lay drunk; doesn't mean you're going to get lucky again." *Oh crap, now you've done it, motor mouth.* Much to her body's relief, he chuckled; as he pulled her tighter against him, she felt his sizable erection poking against her lower belly. *Oh my God!* His lips found the base of her throat, starting to work over her skin.

"Having you that one time was not enough. I came back for more—I came back for you." From anyone other than this golden, god-like man, those words would have sounded like a cheesy pick-up line, but he had said it with such sincerity Nessa couldn't help but believe him.

Now Nessa knew why some people spontaneously combusted—her internal temperature had soared. Her head rolled back of its own volition. Yes, he was going to get lucky again; so was she. As she wrapped her arms up around his neck, one of his hands slid into her hair, gripping the base of her skull.

"I know you want me, Vanessa." *Yeah, who wouldn't?* His lips vibrated against her skin. Her pussy clenched, and she was soaked. Oh yes, she wanted him desperately and wasn't about to deny it.

"At least remind me of your name before I lose all my mental reasoning." Nessa gasped when he lifted her as if she were no heavier than a can of her favorite strawberry soda. "Should I call emergency services for your back?"

"I suppose a little repetition is in order, considering your last state of, as you say, 'mental reasoning.' One: you are in no way heavy. Two: my name is Neman. I'm sure you'll be remembering it from now on. Three: you will be screaming it many times before we are through."

Complete self-assurance shone in his eyes—he was not boasting, just stating a simple fact. As he carried her through to her bedroom, Nessa should have been concerned by the fact that he knew the layout of her



apartment. But when his lips covered hers, claiming her mouth with his, his tongue plunging possessively into her mouth and drinking every flavor of her down, she didn't care. Boy, did he know how to kiss—every strum of his tongue, pull of his lips and grazing of his teeth told her he had it perfected to an art. No kiss would ever again compare to this, and to think it was only the beginning of what he had to offer. Nessa wanted the full tour of what he had to give; even then, she doubted it would ever be enough. Placing her on the bed, he gripped her uniform shirt, tearing the material off her body. Nessa gasped at his strength.

“Hey, that was my last work shirt.”

“I'll buy you anything you desire, drape you in earthly gems, but I want you naked, Vanessa.” He said it with such dominance that it made her heart flutter. He continued his assault on her clothing. Nessa no longer cared when she heard her skirt rip and it was yanked down her legs.

“Hmmm, I remember giving you these.” He kissed the top of her shoulder, following the line of fading love bites down her body. Soft moans escaped as his hand skimmed up over her sensitive skin to the valley of her breasts. He gripped at her bra, tearing it in the middle, pulling it off and tossing it casually aside.

“You have magic hands,” Nessa told him as he caressed her lower stomach.

“Magic comes from the heart, not the hands, sweetness.” The top of his fingers hooked into her panties, yanking them down and off her legs. Totally bare before him, Nessa lowered her eyes to see where he was staring. He was examining her new tattoo. Nessa swallowed, not sure how to explain the mark.

“I don't remember getting that done.” His gaze met hers as he traced the pattern with his thumb. “I have no idea what it is; the things people do when drunk, huh?”

"It's an ancient symbol of a man and woman joining for eternity."

"Really? How do you know that?" Nessa rose up on her elbows; she looked at him in suspicion. "You didn't do it to me, did you?"

"Sweetness, I did many things to you that night, but that is not one of them." He bent, kissing the tattoo. "It also means you are very special."

Nessa had no clue what he was talking about.

"Oh, please, I'm not special; I'm just an ordinary ahhh...ooohhh..." Neman's fingers, finding the core of her desire and closing over her swollen nub, cut off anything else she was about to say.

"You don't think you deserve a man like me, Vanessa?" His golden eyes intently regarded her. Nessa bucked off the bed as he inserted a thick digit into her weeping heat. She couldn't talk, but managed to nod. Something about this man compelled her to be totally honest with him.

"Maybe I do not deserve a woman like you, my sweetness—we have much to learn together." Plunging a second finger into her core, he slowly fucked her with his fingers. Slow enough to make her tremble from need, yet not allow her release. Nessa was not beyond begging.

"Neman, please," she gasped.

"Tell me you are worthy of me, my Vanessa, and believe it." When his mouth found her breast and he took a large amount into his mouth, teeth scraping across her nipple, sucking in time with his thrusting fingers, the fire and ice running through her body was almost unbearable. Right now he could ask her to tap dance naked on top of the Sydney Harbor Bridge and she'd do it with a smile.

"I am, I am worthy of you, I want you, Neman." Huffing out the words in little pants, she could almost feel him smiling. He released her breast with a soft "plop" before his face disappeared between her legs.

Nessa gasped in shock as his hot tongue swiped over her clit, circled it several times before sucking it into his mouth. Three long successive pulls and the climax ripped through Nessa's body, while she screamed Neman's name to the heavens. He kept a firm grip of her hips as she bucked, his mouth releasing her clit to slide into her core and lap up the flowing cream, riding her through the intense orgasm. But it wasn't enough—she needed to be filled by him.

“Neman, please, I want you inside me.”

“And I shall be, my sweetness.” He licked his lips, rising up over her, and gripped onto her hips. He flipped her over easier than a ragdoll before pulling her up onto her hands and knees. “Hold on to the headboard.”

Excited at the new position, she scrambled to comply. At thirty-two, she hadn't had a heck of a lot of sexual experience; she'd only ever done it missionary style and once on top, but that had soon been scrapped when she was informed she was too heavy for that position. His hands smoothed over the globes of her ass.

“Finer than the best alabaster, soft and round to fill my hand.” His teeth grazed across her ass cheeks as his fingers ran down the crack of her ass. “I've had your sweet wet channel; now I want you here.” Nessa gasped—it didn't take a rocket scientist to figure out what he meant. His fingers found the little puckered rosette, sliding it up and down. Nessa tensed.

“But I...I've never...”

“You're a virgin here. Relax, my sweetness—I will not hurt you. I shall be the first and only one to enjoy you, a sweet virgin offering to the gods.” There was amusement in his voice. Nessa trembled as he pushed his fingers into the slick opening of her pussy, losing the question that had formed on the tip of her tongue.

## Dangerous Moonlight by Angela Castle

---

"Would you like that, my sweet Vanessa, to have me take your virgin ass?" *Oh God yes!* She'd never thought it a place she would enjoy having filled, but he made everything he did and say sound and feel pleasurable. It was turning her on even more. He pulled juices from her dripping pussy, sliding them up and over to lubricate her hole before working a thick male finger inside. Nessa groaned, pushing her ass back onto the finger.

"That's a good girl." He whispered into the skin of her back, withdrawing his fingers, and Nessa gave a small yelp as she felt something cold and smooth over her ass crack. Glancing back over her shoulder, she saw he had the strawberry body cream she used. How had it gotten from her dresser into his hand? That thought flew from her mind as he worked the cream in, lubricating his fingers and her passage. She groaned louder as two fingers pushed in.

"I see where you get this alluring scent from, sweetness."

All this talk and no action was driving Nessa to the brink of madness. "Less talk, more sex," she groaned out, feeling her ass being stretched.

"Eager minx." Once again his fingers withdrew and were replaced by a larger pressure. Instinctively Nessa pulled away, but Neman had wrapped his arm tightly around her waist, his expert fingers finding her clit, stroking the sensitive nub. Nessa gasped, pushing back as he pushed his cock in.

"By the Great God Anu, you are tight, my sweet one," he groaned.

Nessa could hear the strain in his voice as he worked his way into her. She found the pressure was uncomfortable on one level, but not entirely. Nessa wanted more as he gently pushed in until he was seated deep within her.

*How in hell have I let a complete stranger fuck me twice?* her brain

piped in. *Who cares when it feels so fantastic?* The rest of her body winning the argument, Nessa gave herself over to the feeling of being ass fucked by Mr.... Well, whoever he was, she'd find out and deal with the consequences later.

"Aaaahhhhhh oooh yessss Neman!" she screamed out as he tweaked her clit again. Every part of her body was mounting to an insurmountable peak. Nessa wanted to rush toward the precipice and throw herself over with abandon.

"Harder, Neman, faster!" she cried out. The slap of his front on her ass filled the room along with pants and groaning, the force of his thrusts making Nessa wonder if she'd get friction burns on her knees. Nessa went flying over that edge; every nerve end zinged and tingled as stars exploded behind her eyes. It was unlike anything she had ever experienced in her life.

Neman gave a deep guttural growl as he came, declaring, "Yessss, Vanessa, you are mine!"

*Oh yes I am.* Nessa's arms collapsed onto the bed, her ass still high in the air, impaled on Neman's amazing cock. She felt him slip out, and they both fell onto her bed. He pulled her into his arms and gently kissed her.

"Are you all right?"

Nessa's whole body felt heavy, tired. Snuggling into Neman's warmth, all she could do was give an unintelligible murmur as her mind fogged over and she fell into a deep sleep.

\* \* \* \* \*

Plan A was all shot to hell; now what was he going to do? He cursed himself for being unable to control his lust around her. There seemed to be more than just anointing that made Neman want her. He checked the steady rhythm of her heart, no doubt exhausted from too many climaxes so early on in her state. He climbed off the bed, heading into her overly pink decorated bathroom to retrieve a washcloth. Then he came back and gently washed her clean. He would have to take better care of her from now on. How was he was going to explain who he was, why she was pregnant? Not to mention the length of her pregnancy and, sooner or later, the method of delivery. It would be figured out when the time came, and he knew it would come soon.

He crawled back onto her bed, pulling her into his arms, cradling her against him, taking the time to let it absorb into his system, the fact that his baby grew within her. The thought of having a family again had never crossed his mind since the theft of his powers, since the death of his children. Finding the demons who'd taken his powers and exacting revenge had consumed his every waking hour. Now things were changing once again; he had a new responsibility whether he wanted it or not. Neman found himself wanting it. With Vanessa he could have the things that he had been denying himself for thousands of years. He could not stop searching, nor would he give up his revenge. He'd just take a little detour. After all, immortality had its advantages. The only question that remained was, was it a life she would want?

## **Chapter Five**

It had taken him longer to locate Neman than usual. He sniffed the air, detecting Neman's scent on a bike parked not too far from where Slazzamar leaned against the red brick wall of an apartment block and brooded. After eight hundred years of being treated as an outcast, no one caring if he lived or died, why hadn't he developed a thicker skin against all the shit thrown at him? It had only been hard work, determination and sheer hate that had pulled him out of the squalor of the Lower Realms. He had learned quickly that information meant power. Slazzamar had made it his purpose to obtain information, to know something about everyone significant in the Lower and Outer Realms. Important creatures were willing to pay nicely to gain the upper hand on their enemy, to have someone snoop or inform on a betrayer. So Slazzamar the Sneak was born. Although he had become a vital source of information to many creatures, he was still treated with distaste and hatred. Everything he knew came with a dirty price; he had always put his own pleasures above anything

else, but this time Slazzamar had had enough. He wanted something different, to feel something different. He no longer wanted to be Slazzamar the Sneak.

His keen hearing picked up the sounds of passion coming from the second-story floor across the street. The deep growls of Neman and the moans and screams of pleasure from the woman he was fucking. Jealously ripped through him; for once in his pathetic life he wanted someone to want him, for him and not just as a reward for his services. He was no longer going to take paying whores. Slazzamar's temper flared, and he threw out a spell to dampen the noise before he poured his rage into destroying a nearby trashcan, kicking the metal object into a battered state. He didn't want to alert Neman to the fact that he had been tracking him. If Slazzamar could easily track Neman, then others would as well—it was only a matter of time. He placed his hand against the cool of the brick wall and took a deep, calming breath.

"Whatever that bin did to you, I'm sure it deserved the beating it got," a soft male voice said from behind him. Slazzamar spun around, ready to attack the intruder, but stopped short when a youthful-looking human male with dusty blond hair and hazel eyes walked toward him without any hint of fear, only a look of curiosity. He was dressed in some kind of white uniform and was pretty to look at with high cheekbones, a narrow nose and a strong jawline. "The age-old question: if a tree falls in the woods and no one is there to hear it, does it make a sound? But how do you flatten a metal trashcan without making a sound?"

"I cast a spell," Slazzamar said before thinking.

"A spell? Now that's a neat trick—you'll just have to show me how to do that." A brown satchel was slung over the stranger's left shoulder; his hazel eyes swept Slazzamar from head to toe. "You have the most amazing color hair I've ever seen, not quite white and not quite silver. And your eyes, wow—what color is that, lavender?"



## Dangerous Moonlight by Angela Castle

---

For the first time in his life, Slazzamar was dumbfounded by the stranger's words; never in all his existence had he been told such a thing.

"Who are you?" Slazzamar asked. More to the point, why wasn't this human afraid of his appearance? It wasn't as if he looked exactly human with his elfin features. His white hair, skin tinged pink, and pointed ears were a dead giveaway, but this human didn't seem to notice.

"Darren Claymore at your service." The man smiled at him, making his cheeks dimple on either side. He had stuck out his hand. But Slazzamar made no move to touch him as his body suddenly reacted with a surge of lust for the human. Touching him would be a mistake. "I'm just on my way to visit a friend in the building across the street; want to come with me?"

Slazzamar shook his head. Darren shifted his bag, stepping in closer to him. He was about half an inch shorter than Slazzamar. Slazzamar got his height from his father, the demon. Most elves were no more than five and a half feet tall. He sniffed at the human male, liking his spicy sandalwood scent.

"Have you been to a *Star Trek* convention this evening?" Darren asked, his eyes fixed on Slazzamar's ears.

Slazzamar hadn't a clue what Darren was rambling about. He jumped back as Darren reached out, trying to touch him.

"Sorry, I didn't mean to startle you," Darren said with concern in his eyes. His hand fell by his side.

That was another word Slazzamar was unfamiliar with—sorry. Slazzamar found himself bemused, confused and rather aroused by this man. Maybe this was some kind of trick or test. The thought angered Slazzamar; he moved to grip Darren by the neck, shoving him roughly up against the wall, but not so hard as to hurt him, just enough to show his superior strength over the mortal and frighten him. "Have you come to

test me, human?"

"I've only just met you." Darren pupils dilated with desire, and his breath quickened along with his pulse. Darren curled his hand up around Slazzamar's bicep as if he enjoyed the show of strength. To this human, it was obviously a turn-on to be pushed around. Darren's touch heated Slazzamar through to the bone. His cock hardened further. "I don't know anything about tests." Darren's voice was lower, huskier.

"How do you know I won't tear you to pieces?" The man was looking directly into his eyes and cleared his throat.

"Even though I just met you, and don't even know your name, I trust you not to hurt me." Darren was right—he wouldn't harm this human. Slazzamar removed his hand from his throat but kept him caged in, his hands either side of the man.

"I am Slazzamar. I am not human; does that not frighten you?"

Darren shook his head. "You intrigue me; I've never seen anyone more beautiful in all my life. And if I have to believe you're not human, so be it."

Slazzamar took a step back in stunned silence.

Darren let out a slow breath, as if he needed to steady himself. "Look, I really need to see my friend, and if you want to wait out here that's fine. After that I was thinking we could go back to my place, get to know each other a little better."

Slazzamar didn't miss the suggestiveness in his tone. And he had to face the fact that he desired Darren with a ferocity that frightened and confused him.

"What do you say?" Darren moved away from the wall, stepping trustingly close to Slazzamar.

He did want to get to know this human, but Slazzamar couldn't let the man go into the building at the risk he would get harmed. Slazzamar actually cared about the fact that Darren could get hurt.

"Where is your friend?"

"On the second floor. Such a heartbreaker of a story is Nessa; she caught her boyfriend fucking the next door neighbor only a few nights ago. I mean honestly, what kind of parent names their kid Bunny, without expecting her to grow up into a man-humping whore? But then today we find out Nessa's pregnant. Oh, how unlucky can you get? The poor thing—you know it's a good thing she has a friend like me."

Half of what he rattled off made no sense at all, but Slazzamar did glean one valuable piece of information. Slazzamar looked up at the lights on the second floor, pointing to them.

"Is she in that apartment?"

"Yes. Do you know Nessa too?" Darren asked, wide eyed.

"I know of her, but I would not go up there—your friend Nessa has company."

"Oh goodness, Larry's come back again. I'd better call the cops." Darren dug around in his pockets, pulling out one of those human gadgets Slazzamar had yet to familiarize himself with.

Slazzamar snatched the phone from Darren's fingers.

"No calling the human law—this is an Outer Realm matter now. She is protected as long as Neman is with her."

"An Outer what-er? And who is Neman?"

"He is an ex-god, demon hunter and the baby's father."

“Okay, you seem to know way more about this than I do; who are you really? And give me back my phone, Mr. Slazzamar-I’m-not-human-and-scary-as-mud.” Darren pointed a finger at his chest. His eyes seemed to dance; his cheeks flushed, making him all the more attractive.

Watching Darren’s tongue flip around in his mouth as he spoke was beginning to make Slazzamar’s body burn, so he did the next thing that came into his head. He pressed Darren back against the wall again and kissed him, pushing his own tongue into Darren’s willing mouth. *Beautiful* was the only word that came to mind as he tasted the spicy masculine flavor of this human man. Darren kissed him back with lost abandon, nibbling on Slazzamar’s lower lip. He hadn’t even noticed Darren winding his fingers up into his hair, as Slazzamar plundered his mouth over and over. This was something Slazzamar could easily become addicted to. A deep, husky groan sounded, and Slazzamar wasn’t sure if it came from Darren or himself.

The sudden feel of the electricity in the air, the kind that only magic or the presence of Outer Realm beings could provide, alerted him to danger. Slazzamar broke the kiss. Darren scrambled to pull him back. Slazzamar noticed the desire in Darren’s eyes, and his aroused cock tenting his white pants. He pressed his fingers over Darren’s mouth to silence his protests.

“Hush, be very quiet, watch—if we are seen or heard, they will kill us.” Pulling Darren deeper into the shadows, keeping him tight against his body, he turned his attention back to the building across the street, where he counted at least five shadowy figures creeping across the parking lot and vanishing inside.

The game had begun, and not due to any of his information. For once his conscience was clear. Slazzamar could feel the beating of Darren’s heart and his hot breath against his neck. He felt Darren’s fear, yet it was not for himself.

## **Dangerous Moonlight by Angela Castle**

---

"Nessa." He cared for his friend. Slazzamar looked into Darren's eyes, and even in the shadows they picked up aspects of the light, amazing Slazzamar. This human was beautiful. In that moment, Slazzamar decided, he was his.

"Trust me, Darren—just watch." Darren nodded, then turned to watch. All earthly hell broke loose on the second floor. Slazzamar could feel the magic bolts before the flashes of light. A woman screamed, glass shattered, Darren gasped and struggled in shock. Slazzamar used his strength to keep him pinned. The whole side of the second-story wall was blown apart. Slazzamar waited for the escape he knew Neman would make with the Chosen One.

"There—you see." He pointed to a couple running for their life across the car park toward them. "He has her safe; do not fear, you will see her again." With that, Slazzamar pulled Darren into a tight embrace. "Prepare yourself, human; now we go to my home." Slazzamar let his power build, knowing the teleport would be covered with all the other magic in the air. With a telltale "pop," they were gone.

\* \* \* \* \*

Neman grabbed Nessa, pitching them both to the ground and rolling to cover her body with his as the explosion sent glass and debris flying everywhere and smoke billowed out from the now gaping hole in the side of the building.

"What in blue blazes!" Vanessa gasped from under him, her wide eyes staring at the almost total destruction of her small dwelling. But now was not the time to stare and gape. He pushed himself to his feet, pulling Vanessa along with him.

"My apartment!" Her wide eyes were staring up at the destruction of her home.

"Sorry, sweetness, not much I can do about that. We have to run now." He glanced over the visible parts of her body, checking her for injury. Seeing none, he kept a firm grip on her upper arm, tugging her at a hurried pace towards his bike.

"Are you all right?" She seemed to be in a state of shock.

"Oh yeah, bloody brilliant...what the hell is going on!" He didn't have time to explain. Two demons out of the five that had come for them appeared in the crater they'd just created in the apartment-block wall, their glowing red eyes searching out their intended target. How on the gods' names had they found her so fast? He swept up the helmet and placed it on her head, pushing it firmly down. He swiftly lifted her up, placing her on the back. The sheet wrapped around her body pushed up to show her creamy thighs as she straddled the bike.

"Hang on, beautiful." He mounted in front, and her arms slipped around his waist, holding him in a death grip, fingers inches from his cock. Her naked thighs were pressed against his outer thighs. But now was not the time to be thinking about sex. Even so, with just her pale pink sheet wrapped around her body like a toga, leaving her thighs and arms exposed, he couldn't help but want her again.

Another bolt flowed past their heads, splintering a power pole. His bike roared to life, the back wheel spinning with a burning of rubber as they skidded out onto the road, the falling poles and wires narrowly missing them. One of the demons hit the ground, running toward them. Neman pushed his bike into a higher gear and sped out of the demon's reach. He could feel Vanessa's trembling arms tighten in fright around him. He needed to get them far enough away to be able to teleport without being traced. Teleports, although an easy way to get around, left a distinct signature. Any supernatural creatures with the ability to teleport

## **Dangerous Moonlight by Angela Castle**

---

could trace each other within the first ten to fifteen seconds of teleporting.

“Where are we going?” Nessa’s voice was barely audible above the rushing wind.

“Right now, anywhere away from here,” he yelled back. She seemed to be trying to press herself closer against him; he felt her body trembling in the cool night air.

Cursing the demons for mounting a surprise attack, he had felt the energy in the air, giving him enough time to pull on pants, boots, and shirt and wrap a confused, sleepy Vanessa in her own bed sheet, before carrying her to the back window and to the fire exit. Vanessa gave a scream as the front door splintered loudly into thousands of pieces. Power bolts haphazardly flew, missing their targets and destroying everything else nearby. He was thankful they were lousy shots. Never weaponless, Neman had managed to embed four daggers into the heart and head of three demons as they came barging through the gaping hole they had made in the door. Moving swiftly to lift Vanessa into his arms and holding her tight against him, he’d leapt over the railing, landing easily on his feet from the two-story drop.

Now he’d have no choice but to explain everything to her. After all, seeing was believing to humans. Tonight she had seen and experienced a lot. But the first priority was to get her to safety.

## **Chapter Six**

For the second time in Nessa's life she was wearing a sheet, not counting the time she was six years old running around in her mother's best white sheets, pretending to be a ghost. She smelled like chocolate, the sheet being no real mystery. As for the source of the chocolate smell, she had her arms wrapped around him, her front pressed firmly against his back as she hung onto him for dear life. The cold night air was slowly turning her into a blue popsicle as they powered along the east coast of Sydney on a rather expensive-looking motorbike. The new great mystery was, why was there a gaping hole in her apartment wall? Who the heck was Neman? Who were those weird-looking men who had blown her apartment to oblivion? At least she had ruled out the possibility of Neman being an underwear model.

Everything had happened so fast; only now, shivering on the back of a bike, could she try to make sense of what had happened. She poked



him in the ribs—she wanted off this ride and an explanation. “You trying to freeze me to death?” she yelled against the rushing wind. Immediately the bike slowed and pulled off the main road, before coming to a complete stop. Neman’s long legs kicked out the stand before dismounting.

“Sorry, sweetness. I think we’re far enough away now so they can’t track us.” Nessa pulled off the helmet.

“They, as in the ones who made confetti out of my apartment? I always wanted to remodel, but something a little less conspicuous. The landlord is going to be more than a little pissed.”

Neman lifted her off the bike, pulling her into his arms. He rubbed her arms, his warmth comforting, and his smell...oh, he always smelled so good, heating her blood, turning her on, making her want him. Oh, for goodness’ sake, somehow he’d managed to turn her into a horny twit!

“You feel it don’t you?” he said, giving her a half grin that could melt the polar ice caps.

“Feel what?”

“The irresistible pull between us. Just being close to you, Vanessa, I want you again.”

Nessa swallowed and pulled herself out of his arms.

“Irresistible bull, you mean.” Nessa tugged the sheet closer around herself, then put her hands on her hips, attempting to give him her best angry glare. “Are you even going to attempt to explain what happened back there? Or who you are?”

“You want it sugar-coated or straight-up?”

“I’m standing here in my bed sheet, in the middle of the night out in the Australian scrub, with a complete stranger, my apartment blown to bits, and you have the nerve to ask me if I want it sugar-coated!”

He just gave her another cocky grin. "You look rather fetching in that sheet, and I wouldn't say complete stranger after what we've done."

Nessa felt her stare turn murderous.

"All right." He lifted his hands to show his surrender. "But you may not believe what I'm going to tell you."

"Try me, buster!"

Neman stepped in close, his arm snaking around her waist and pulling her against his warmth. Nessa looked up into his eyes; even in the darkness they seemed have a golden glow.

"Before I do, I want to get you to a safer, warmer place. Then I vow an oath by the gods themselves to tell you anything you want to know." He placed his right hand over his heart. "No harm will befall you, Vanessa, I promise." He finished with a soft, "Please." His warmth, his smell, his touch made her turn into goo in his arms. He really had turned her into a horny twit.

"All right, but it's darn cold on that bike."

Another smile split his handsome face. "We don't need the bike anymore, sweetness—hold on tight."

With his arms secure around her, but confused by his statement, Nessa felt a kind of electric charge in the air as every fine hair on her body stood up. Instinct made her grip onto his shirt and squeeze her eyes shut as the power built. With a sudden "pop," it faded; immediately she felt warm air and light surrounding her. Whoa, what a buzz.

"You took that rather well, I must say." Neman's amused deep voice made her open her eyes. "Most mortals feel sick or panicked when teleported." Neman let her go, and she stumbled backwards to take in the new surroundings.

## Dangerous Moonlight by Angela Castle

---

Daylight streamed in through large opulent windows. Colors of cream and gold throughout the room, soft carpet beneath her bare feet; a large king-sized bed stood invitingly in the middle of the room, with ornate furniture carefully positioned to add to the luxury of the huge bedroom. You could fit her entire apartment and some in this one room. Neman moved around her to the windows, where he drew thick, gold-patterned curtains across to cut out the light.

"I kind of hate to state the obvious, but it was the middle of the night a few seconds ago."

"We're in the Northern Hemisphere, sweetness; it's late morning in L.A." Nessa felt her head start to throb as she battled to make sense of everything.

"You somehow magically transported us from Australia to the United States?"

"That about sums it up, yes, but we call it teleporting."

"Bet you save a fortune on airfares."

Neman chuckled at her comment. "You'll get used to it; to me it's as natural as breathing."

"I see." Nessa padded her bare feet to the end of the bed and sat down; she was tired and hungry. She hadn't had anything to eat for dinner. "I've had some weird dreams before, but this takes the cake." Neman walked over, sat down and pinched her arm hard.

"Ooww! What was that for?" She retaliated by punching him in his own arm; it was a delightful sound, his laughter.

"Still think you're dreaming?"

She looked at the gentle smile on his face as she rubbed her arm. "No, okay, so I'm not dreaming. That brings me to two obvious questions,

## Dangerous Moonlight by Angela Castle

---

Houdini. Who and what are you? You just called me a mortal, which implies you're not."

"You wanted the truth, so here goes. My title, although not that important I once was Nanna, first born of Enlil, also known as Suen or Asim-babbar, Sumerian God of the Moon and Fertility."

Nessa stared at him, not sure if she should start running now or wait till he was asleep to escape the madman. She drew in a deep breath, letting it out slowly. "You're a Sumerian god?"

"Not anymore—I used to be."

"Just how old are you?"

"Six thousand three hundred and seventy, give or take a few years."

Nessa's jaw dropped. "Wow, talk about an age gap. I bet your mother has a hell of a time putting that many candles on your birthday cake. If you used to be a god, what are you now?"

"Technically I still am a god, but at the moment I hunt rogue demons."

Nessa was slightly confused. She tapped her finger on her chin, thinking.

"So you're an ex-Sumerian god turned rogue demon hunter. If you ask me, that's quite a downturn in your career." Nessa noticed the dark scowl that crossed his face.

He stood up and paced in front of her. "There's a whole world out there, Vanessa, of creatures you would think are only myth. Most are confined to Realms we call the Lower Realm and Outer Realm. Those who aren't confined to their own Realm live in the Human Realm, hidden among the human populace, some very dangerous if not kept in check. I

know you'll find it hard to believe, sweetness, but I was not born human." He turned and knelt down before her, taking her hands into his, looking into her eyes. Something radiated out from him, his golden eyes, the ethereal-looking skin, making Nessa think maybe he wasn't a madman after all, but actually telling her the truth.

Nessa gasped as he stood suddenly, yanking the sheet from her body, picking her up to lay her down gently on the center of the large bed. His hands skimmed over her skin and came to rest on her stomach. Nessa couldn't stop her body's reaction if she tried. Before his eyes, her nipples hardened, and she felt the wetness flood between her thighs. His eyes seem to drink her in.

"You are beautiful, Vanessa," he said as his hands caressed her lower belly. Nessa loved the way he said her name, sounding more like *Varr-nessa*. "Do you know you carry my child, Vanessa?"

Nessa gasped; how on earth did he know she was pregnant? "How do you know? I only just found out I was...and I thought Larry..."

Neman gave a growl of disapproval. "Never mention his name again, Vanessa—the child is mine." His arm tightened around her possessively as he looked down into her eyes. "The fates have anointed you to be mine, Vanessa. In a way, you have always belonged to me. And now I have you."

As much as those words sent a chill down her body, her mind instantly rebelled at the thought of being a mere possession. Nessa quickly rolled out from under him, scrambling off the bed before turning and glaring at him.

"I don't care who or what you think you are, Neman. I'm not just some floozie you can pick up off the street to join your little cult. There is no way I could be pregnant by you—we only had sex three nights ago. And for your information, I don't belong to anyone but me, so you can shove that up your drainpipe and choke." Nessa spun around, heading

for the door.

“Where are you going, Vanessa?”

“To find an Australian embassy and get my naked ass home.”

“The demons that destroyed your apartment weren’t sent to kill me, Vanessa—they were sent to kill you.”

Nessa’s hand froze on the door handle; what did he mean, “sent to kill her”? She turned around, and her mouth went dry. He had removed his shirt, and his fine muscled chest looked as decadent as sin where he lay casually on the bed, his head propped up on his fist, the shoulder-length black hair fallen over his strong bronzed shoulders as he watched with his alluring golden eyes. He patted the bed next to him, trying to tempt her back. Oh yes, he was more tempting than her favorite double chocolate strawberry liqueur ice cream. It then hit her with full force that he *was* a god, a real live god. Nessa had been fucked by a deity! How many girls get to boast about that?

“There is much more you should know, Vanessa. If you still want to leave after you know all of it, I will take you home.”

Nessa was of two minds, for something told her that once she did know it all, there would be no way to leave. But if she left now, ignorant of the truth, maybe she could just get on with her life. A life alone as a single mother. Then there was Darren. Oh cripes, Darren—he must be frantic about her if he’d come to her apartment.

“I need to call Darren!” she blurted out. Neman sat up, and she could see an angry glare in his eyes.

“Another lover, Vanessa—how many boyfriends did you have?”

Nessa actually cracked a smile at the jealousy in Neman’s voice and expression; he looked like he was about to murder any man who had ever

come within six feet of her. How sweet, how very macho, how very wrong—no, not wrong, this was something none of her previous boyfriends had ever done. Not that Neman was her boyfriend, just because they'd fucked a few times. She was pregnant, yes, but that was all there was to it, wasn't it? Nessa tried to clear her head; now wasn't the time to ponder over such things. She stalked back to the bed, launching herself up and landing on top of Neman. She pushed him back on the bed as she straddled his chest, placed her hands on his shoulders, and looked into his eyes.

"Now listen here bozo, I don't have time for your archaic jealousy. Darren is a near and dear friend to me. He was meant to be visiting me tonight, to make sure I was all right after the shock of finding out I was pregnant. So either get me to a phone or go back and make sure he's all right. I don't want those things, demons or whatever they are, to harm him—got that?"

A smile split his handsome face, and a mobile phone suddenly appeared out of thin air.

He gave it to her. "I thought dealing with demons was difficult." He chuckled.

"Neat trick. Can you magic some Tim-Tams to me as well? I'm starving."

"Doesn't work like that. I can only teleport objects from where I know they are. Just dial the direct number." He looked in no hurry for her to move off him as she sat on his chest, dialing Darren's number. She tried his home number, got his voicemail and became worried. Neman's hands had snaked their way up her hips. Calloused fingertips rubbed against her skin, raising her internal temperature.

She slapped at his hands, but he only slid them up to cup her breast. "I'm not getting any answer—you sure this thing is working?" She looked at the phone.

## Dangerous Moonlight by Angela Castle

---

"It's working." He took the phone from her, glanced at it before it vanished from his hand.

She could still see the jealousy in his eyes. "You don't have to look at me like that. Darren is gayer than a Hawaiian shirt, and he's been my best friend for the better part of six years."

Only then did he seem to relax. "I'll send someone to check on him, but right now there are more important things to talk about." Neman shifted, and in one swift move she found herself once again pinned beneath him. Nessa sighed, figuring that if she stuck around this man or god or whatever he was, she'd be here a lot.

\* \* \* \* \*

Her blue eyes glared up at him, reminding Neman of the morning blue in a summer sky.

"All right, Mr. I'm-a-God-but-not, spill the beans. Let's start with why you think I'm having *your* baby." Even when pinned beneath him, naked and vulnerable, she had the audacity to make demands of him; such strength of spirit shone through.

"When a god gets a mortal with child, the child is also known as a Nephilim. The pregnancy advances more swiftly than a normal human pregnancy."

Panic flashed through her expression. "Um, how swiftly?"

"Our son will be born six months from now."

She seemed to relax at the news. "So by normal standards I'm already three months pregnant. I guess that's not so bad, but how do you



know it's a boy? A little lady could be swimming around in there for all you know—or do you have some godly power to detect its gender?"

He shook his head. "I know it's a boy because all this was no mere accident. Believe it or not, Vanessa, you have been chosen to bear my child—a very special child."

Nessa frowned. "Chosen by whom? And what would make him so special, apart from you claiming he's yours?"

"There are gods of fate and destiny that have preordained things long before even the heavens were set in place. Sometimes these things leak like drips of water down to earth and are known as prophecies, declared by those who catch the right drops, written down. Some are harmless and helpful; some are not."

"Do you have any idea how weird that sounds to me?"

"I know what I'm talking about, Vanessa. What's the saying? 'Been there, done that.' Four thousand years ago, it was prophesied that a special child would be born. He would heal the fracture between Realms and stop the demons leaking out; a great 'prince,' he would bring an end to the warring in the Lower Realms and Outer Realms. As I explained before, there are four different Realms. This one, the here and now, is the Human Realm; there is also the Heavenly Realm, the Lower Realm and the Outer Realm."

Neman watched her process the information, enjoying the animated way her face would light up and ponder a question, the little lines that creased her forehead when she was confused, the stubborn way she set her jaw when her temper flared, the way she had made him laugh—a feat not accomplished in a very long time. There was so much depth to this woman; he was beginning to realize he could happily spend years, decades, even centuries exploring those depths.

"Are you trying to tell me I'm some kind of Virgin Mary. and I'm

going to deliver the savior of the world, of these Realms?"

He shook his head; the smell of her skin was making his mouth water again. Unable to stop himself, he bent his head and began tasting the hollow of her throat, swirling his tongue around and down between the valley of her glorious breasts, breasts that were created for him. She could deny it, but she did belong to him.

"You know it's hard to concentrate when you're doing that."

He could feel the rapid beat of her heart, could sense her breathing quicken, her soft skin rising in little goose bumps when he blew gently on the skin he'd just tasted. She let out a soft moan. He raised his head. She was just too tempting like this. His cock was painfully hard and aching to be imbedded deep inside her wet heat again. He had vowed to take better care of her. Although it tore at him to do it, Neman pulled away from her, climbed up and off the bed. The look of confusion crossing her face hurt him more than his painful cock.

"My apologies, Vanessa. I find it hard to control my urges around you." She raised an eyebrow, rolled over and sat up.

"Good to know. Can we get back to this Chosen One bit now?"

"It has been declared that there would be a woman chosen to bare this prince, and we would know her by the mark—that tattoo you do not remember getting, Vanessa."

She looked down to her hip, tracing the pattern.

"It was probably always there on you from birth, only appearing after we had sex that night."

"So let me get this straight—I'm having your baby, I'm only going to be pregnant for six months, and I'm some kind of Chosen One because the baby is going to bring peace or mend something in some Lower or

Outer Realm."

"I'm glad you understand." Neman liked the fact that she was quick on the uptake.

"Yup, that bit I get; what about the bit where you said those demons are out to kill me? I would have thought having some sort of prince to fix things is a good thing."

"This is where it gets complicated and very dangerous. Vanessa, I won't lie to you. The Lower Realm has been fractured for thousands of years. Demon war lords, demon queens and kings have been fighting to break out of the Lower Realm. The other supernatural creatures in the Outer Realm have been only barely holding them at bay. These demons will not give up their power easily; they do want not the fracture sealed. This baby is a threat to them and their power-hungry ways; they will be out to kill you and the child." Neman watched as the news sank in and some of the color drained from her face. Cursing silently, he went back to the bed and pulled her into his arms. "Do not fear, Vanessa—I will protect you and the baby. We'll get through this together, I vow this to you. As a god, any vow I make I cannot break."

"Did you know this was going to happen to me?" she asked quietly, putting her head against his chest so he could not see her face.

"I did not know until after it was too late. I knew of the prophecy but not my role in it until yesterday evening, when an informant brought me news of it. It was then I realized what had happened and why when I saw you I could not resist you; an anointing is something even a god cannot deny."

"I don't understand the term 'anointing.'"

Neman thought of how best to explain it. "The Greeks have Cupid. Although a rather annoying man, he has a special arrow that makes one attracted to another; the Gods of Sumeria and Ur call it anointing. A

special scent is placed upon the victim, and the rest, as you say, is history."

"So it makes you fall in love?" She raised her head.

"No, nothing can make you fall in love—not even Cupid's arrow can do that. It makes you fall in lust, not love," he said in all truth.

"Oh, okay." She drew in a breath before looking up at him with troubled and tired eyes. "Neman, would you mind if I rested? I'm suddenly not feeling too good—morning sickness and all that stuff."

He didn't blame her for wanting some time alone. He kissed the top of her head, scooped her up off the bed and pulled back the covers, then placed her back into it. Her lovely long hair fanned out along the satin pillow.

"Set your mind at ease, sweetness. I promised to take care of you, and I will." Brushing his lips gently across hers, he turned and walked away, quietly exiting the room. Neman looked down at the bulge in his pants. Right now he needed to take care of his own needs before fronting up downstairs. Neman had to start planning and preparing; as long as he could keep her hidden, he had some time, but he knew it couldn't be for long.

## **Chapter Seven**

“You dare enter my domain, Belshazzar?” Jezebel charged her powers, ready for any sudden moves the King of the Shadow Realms and his entourage may make. Her guards stood around, tense and ready to attack on her order to kill the trespassers.

“As unpleasant as it is to be in your presence, Jezebel, I believe that we have a common problem.”

Jezebel narrowed her green eyes on the tall creature in flowing black robes, his piercing red eyes glowing out from his hooded face. Although she was not directly at war with him, hostilities over border territories were always keeping them on edge. Belshazzar had been pouring his energy and resources into his war with Lord Derkin for longer than she cared to remember. It was never a wise move to stretch resources between two wars when one was taxing enough.

"I have found the Chosen One," he said.

Jezebel's rage boiled to the front, and she could feel her blood heat and knew her eyes glowed red with her anger. Why had her sources not been quicker to find her than Belshazzar's? "If you're here, then your own attempts at destroying the Chosen One have failed," she hissed at him.

"I sent sniffer demons to track her down," his deep voice said calmly. "We found her dwelling, so I sent five shadow warriors to kill her. Unfortunately, Neman was already there, and he killed three of them, then took her before the others could complete their task. Neman now hides her. I know you've been attempting to track her yourself, and your pre-emptive strikes have failed."

"Neman cannot hide her forever—it is only a matter of time before she is found again—but she will die," Jezebel said confidently, taking several steps down from her platform to approach the Shadow Realm King.

"Neman will hide her well. So I am here to propose a little, shall we say, mutual venture on behalf of our own interests."

Jezebel would agree to just about anything to gain the upper hand, even if it meant breaking her word afterwards. "I am listening." She mimicked the same calm tone as Belshazzar.

"Now we have the woman's image and scent, tracking her will not be difficult in the Human Realm. I can even use the humans to aide us, but Neman is a different matter. I hear you were once able to subdue him."

Jezebel gave a laugh of pure malevolence, pulling the glowing blue amethyst out from under her dress. "I stole his godly powers and killed his weakling family. I have leverage over the former god. Just because I cannot use his powers doesn't mean I should give them back."

"With our resources combined, we should be able to kill both

Neman and the Chosen One.”

Jezebel thought about it. It wasn’t a bad idea, as long as she didn’t have to listen to that dreadful hollow voice of Belshazzar’s for too long. She raised her chin to the Shadow Realm King.

“Very well, I agree. We can get this mess sorted out and go back to killing each other, and I know just the place to re-start the search.” Jezebel turned to one of her demon soldiers. “Bring me Slazzamar the Sneak.”

\* \* \* \* \*

Now this was something Nessa could get used to. She let out long sigh of pleasure as she sank down into the heated water and bubbles of an overly massive bathtub. The water helped soothe away her current troubles and ease some of the aches from last night’s misadventures. When Nessa had woken, for a fleeting moment she had thought it had all been just one long crazy dream, but the satin sheets smoothed over her sensitive naked body made her open her eyes. She was still in the large bedroom Neman had left her in, and everything had come flooding back with full force. Nessa yawned and stretched like a feline before sitting up and crawling to the side of the opulent bed. As she stood up she swayed a little on her feet; a fleeting feeling of nausea swept over her before subsiding. Letting out a sigh of relief that she wasn’t going to puke anytime soon, she went in search of a bathroom—she seemed to need to pee a lot lately. Upon seeing the bathroom’s huge bathtub Nessa couldn’t resist filling it up.

How had her life turned from normal and mundane to inside out, upside down and every which way from Sunday? Gods, demons and perhaps even Santa Claus for all she knew truly existed, and from what she understood, a good portion of them were out for her and her baby’s

blood. As fucked up as the whole situation was, Nessa wasn't one to let things drag her down; such was her nature. "Roll with the punches," her dad had always said, "and keep on rolling till you can kick them in the gonads, then run for your life." She missed her father's offbeat humor, his ever-present cheery smile. He had been gone for over six years now, passing from a sudden coronary. Her mother she barely remembered, as she'd passed away from breast cancer when Nessa had been two. Her father had more than made up for lack of a mother; she couldn't have asked for a more caring and nurturing parent.

Nessa sighed, and her thoughts turned to Neman. Sure, he was a stud muffin, with abs you could do your laundry off of, but from what he had told her about being anointed, his attraction to her was purely due to this anointing business; the heart didn't enter into the equation. He didn't love her—not that she loved him. Or did she? Could she tell the difference between lust for Neman and love? Although she'd never admit it to him, she had liked when he had gotten all macho and possessive over her. Maybe there was a spark of something else other than this anointed stuff. Probably not—of course he'd be nice and caring toward her, as this baby mattered a great deal to him.

Nessa frowned. There was another issue that made them incompatible; he was immortal. She would simply keep growing old and frumpy and then eventually die, while he continued looking young, vigorous and mouthwatering. Still, he was her baby's father. Even if he was more certain of that than she, if she was going to do right by and love anyone, then it would be her child.

Hunger compelled her to leave the comfort of the bath. She wrapped herself in a white fluffy bathrobe she'd found hanging on a stand and left the suite in search of food. After taking more turns than a Twister board, she found a stairway and went down into a huge reception area. An elderly Hispanic-looking woman neatly dressed in a pale casual skirt and blouse appeared. Seeing Nessa, her brown eyes widened with a smile as she approached her.



## Dangerous Moonlight by Angela Castle

---

"Ahhh, Miss Myles, glad to see you awake. You slept so long we feared you would never wake. I am Ana, housekeeper for Mr. Neman. He left us with very strict instructions to take the very best care of you."

"Um, thanks, where is he?"

"Mr. Neman had to go see to some business; as you know, he's a very busy man."

Nessa wondered if the housekeeper knew of his ex-god, demon-hunting status.

"But come, come, you must be hungry. It's not often I get to prepare meals here for other than Mr. Neman's employees. A real guest is a rare treat. You must mean a great deal to him—never has he brought a woman as lovely as you here." Her smile held genuine warmth, and she never seemed to draw breath as she spoke; she made Nessa look an amateur in the speed-talking department.

"So, he does bring women here?" The question was out of her mouth before she could stop it.

Ana smiled, leading her into a large kitchen with dark marbled benches and stainless steel appliances. "Oh, no, no, you are the first, my dear."

Ana's statement actually comforted her—Neman didn't bring women home. The cooking smells assaulted Nessa's nose, and her stomach growled.

"Oh, you must be starving." Ana pushed her into a chair, setting a large glass of orange juice in front of her.

"I could eat a horse and chase the jockey. I swear this baby is eating more than me."

Ana's eyebrows shot up. "*Embarazada? El bebé?*"

“Sorry, I um, don’t speak any language other than English and Australian slang.”

“You are having Mr. Neman’s baby?” Ana was quick to translate with a curious gaze.

“Aaahhh, I, um, well, yes.” Nessa felt her face flush from embarrassment. It was a bad habit of hers to let her mouth run away before her brain could catch up. Nessa was unsure if she should have let it slip that she was pregnant, but on the other hand, if Neman trusted this woman with his home, surely knowing about the baby wouldn’t matter. “Sorry, I’m not sure if I should be telling anyone.”

Ana simply grinned broadly. “No, no, this is wonderful news. Congratulations, my dear.” The woman gripped her into a bear hug, wobbling the stool she sat on. “Oh, now I understand Mr. Neman’s instructions to take very special care of you.” Releasing her, Ana busied herself beating eggs, frying things on the stovetop, slicing and dicing. Within ten minutes, she had made pancakes, fluffy eggs, and crispy bacon and had placed a large plate of fresh fruit before her.

Nessa happily tucked in. “This is my first trip to L.A.,” she said between bites. “I don’t know how to explain it, but I kind of don’t have any clothes with me. My, um, clothes kind of got destroyed.” *Along with my whole apartment*, she added silently.

“No need to explain, Miss Myles. I have already been instructed to get you anything you wish. I’ll get you some of my clothes, for now. But you cannot be in Los Angeles without going shopping; lots of pretty maternity clothes will be needed, I think.” She walked to an intercom, pressing a button and firing off in rapid Spanish. A male voice replied.

Nessa was getting more excited by the moment. By the eager gleam in Ana’s eyes, so was she. Nessa had always wanted to travel, and who could turn down a shopping spree? She figured if Neman was footing the bill, why not enjoy the experience.

## Dangerous Moonlight by Angela Castle

---

“It will be so enjoyable; you are going to love the shops here in L.A. Nothing but the best for Mr. Neman’s lady.”

Nessa popped a strawberry into her mouth with a smile; maybe belonging to Neman had more perks than just having his hot bod.

\* \* \* \* \*

Neman had teleported back to Sydney to personally check on this so-called friend of Vanessa’s, yet he was unable to find any sign of him. He also wanted to check the residue traces of the demons that had attacked them last night. Any good hunter knows that knowing your enemy makes you better able to kill them. The human police and fire department had sectioned off her apartment. From what he’d heard from people who lived in the area, they had blamed a gas leak for all the damage done. Neman sniffed at the singed areas the energy bolts had damaged; not many kinds of creatures could cause this kind of destruction. From the sulfuric odor, he knew they were Shadow demons, which meant Belshazzar was after Vanessa, and they would have pilfered her imaged from some of the photos around the room. Neman picked up a small photo in a broken frame, Vanessa smiling her mischievous smile with her arm slung casually around a tall, dusty blond man. This must be the Darren she was so fond of. Neman bit back the jealous rage brewing inside; gay or not, he didn’t like the idea of her being around other men.

He thought back to their first meeting in the alley, his lips twitching at the corners, remembering Vanessa’s drunken state. His amusement vanished as he remembered the Gorlan Kat demon. It all made a twisted kind of sense, the string of women the demon had murdered—he was willing to bet it had been seeking out the Chosen One before Neman got to her. He was now thankful that he had found her in time. This conclusion counted Jezebel in on the hunt as well. The odds were starting

to stack against them. Neman flipped open his phone; it was time to call in the troops and prepare them.

“A week’s holiday is more than two days, Neman,” answered Mark on the second ring.

“Sorry, Mark—something has come up that warrants cancellation of vacation time. I need you to head back to the Zigg and send out a code red to the rest of the agency. Warn all of our contacts about heightened demon activities. Oh, and prepare for extra company, so stock up on food. Make sure there are plenty of strawberries, vanilla ice cream, and some kind of chocolate, the good kind.” The line went silent for a moment.

“Chocolate? You bringing a kid back to the Zigg?” Mark’s tone held a touch of suspicion.

Neman didn’t answer that question. “Watch your back, Mark—there’s more than a few creatures out to nail my ass, and they won’t let a few mortals get in the way of their target.”

“Sure thing, boss; if it’s that bad then watch your own back, okay?”

Neman didn’t say any more; he just snapped his phone shut. He had two more places to visit before he could return to Vanessa; leaving her alone for this long, protected only by mortals, was making him edgy. The intensity of his desire for her continued to amaze him. The effects of the anointing should have been fading by now, so why did he still want her? It was more than just a want—it was a need deep within him. For a very long time, he had denied himself carnal pleasures for the thrill of the hunt, taking pleasure in the kill. So different was Vanessa from Ningal, his wife of long ago. Vanessa was strong willed and light hearted. Vengeance seemed less important now; what he wanted was Vanessa. Her pale blue eyes, heartwarming smile, even her little ramblings touched a place within that he’d never thought could be touched again. He let his lust turn into a dark rage thinking of those who wanted to kill her and his child. No, not this time—he would protect her no matter what the cost. It was time to go

## Dangerous Moonlight by Angela Castle

---

kick down a few doors and beat the shit out of a few demons; when Neman wanted answers, he got them.

\* \* \* \* \*

Nessa had to hand it to the woman—she knew how to shop. Fabulously dressed in the most expensive maternity clothes Nessa had ever seen, she wore a pale blue ruffle wrap dress, complete with a new bra that gave her a plunging neckline that had made more than a few male heads turn to gaze at her best assets, her generous breasts. But Nessa never glanced back; when you had the best, why look at scraps? she thought with an amused smile. The shop assistants were falling over themselves to help her spend Neman's money. Nessa figured he owed her after getting her knocked up and destroying all her earthly possessions. The limo was loaded up with everything Nessa could ever need, and she was now feeling a little tired, yet satisfied with the result of their shopping trip and also in finding a friend in Ana. She sat with Ana alfresco in a crowded café, watching the crowds shuffle past. She sipped her decaf mocha latte, feeling like a movie star after being pampered at a salon even without an appointment. Ana had showed the color of her money and she was ushered right in.

"Enjoying yourself?" Ana smiled.

"Maybe a little too much," Nessa said with a touch of guilt. "We've just spent more money than I make in six months."

Ana laughed. "Trust me, you will not bankrupt Mr. Neman anytime soon. Money matters little to him—he takes care of his own. I know he will be pleased that you are happy."

"I think he's out of the doghouse," Nessa said with a wicked little

grin. "This sure makes up for what happened yesterday; that was one hell of a night."

Ana moved in closer and asked in a hushed voice, "Were you attacked by demons?"

Well, apparently Ana did know that Neman was a demon hunter.

"Um, yes, you could say that. I had my apartment blown to kingdom come. Neman got me out by the skin of my teeth," *and only a bed sheet*. But Ana didn't need to know every detail. Nessa took a second helping of strawberry tart, nibbling on the sweet treat.

"Do not worry now, Mr. Neman will take care of it. He will take care of you," Ana assured her.

Nessa couldn't help but laugh at the seriousness of Ana's tone and expression. "So Neman knocked me up, I've had my apartment blown up, and by now I've probably lost my job. The life I used to know has been hung upside down and all the change shaken from its pockets. If I wallowed in self-pity over every little thing that happens, I'd go stark raving mad; my dad taught me to have a good laugh, appreciate what you've got, and move on."

"You have a wise father; I can see why Mr. Neman is very fond of you." The smile on Ana's face returned.

Nessa gave a laugh. "Well, I'm not sure about the fond part—he said I was more difficult to deal with than a demon. So how long have you been working for Neman then?"

"Many, many years now. When my brother Carlo and I were just children, Mr. Neman saved our lives after our parents were savagely murdered by horrible demon creatures. He killed the demons, and then brought us here to California and had us cared for and educated. He gave us more than we could ever repay. A man as driven as Neman has known

great loss and sorrow; it is why he hunts evil as he does." Ana put a whole new perspective on Neman Nessa hadn't thought about. A rogue demon hunter suddenly had more meaning; he'd been doing it for thousands of years, saving people's lives. He was an unassuming hero. Nessa's heart melted a little further toward the big guy.

"Speaking of lives turned upside down, I need to get to a phone. I'm really worried about my best friend." Nessa turned, scanning the street. "There's a payphone over there," she said, pointing to one a few feet away from the café. "Mind if I borrow some change?"

"Be my guest." Ana dug into her purse and handed her a handful of quarters. "Want me to come?"

"Thanks, the phone is just there. I'll be back in the 'shake of a leg,' as we say in Australia." She smiled as she headed out of the café, waiting while a chubby man in a loud Hawaiian shirt finished his conversation. Someone tapped her on the shoulder.

A tall, well-built, uniformed policeman stood there and said in a deep voice, his expression serious, "Ma'am, are you Vanessa Myles?"

Panic seared through Nessa; she was in a foreign country with no passport or visa—she could she get arrested for that. How would she explain she was magically transported from Australia to the U.S.? "I uh may be," she said, hesitating to answer. "Can I get back to you on that?"

He took a firm hold of her arm and began to pull her along after him. "I need you to come with me, ma'am."

Her eyes flew to Ana, who had already risen from her seat; the man was pulling her along. If she resisted, things could get worse—she'd watched those "cop" shows on TV. "I think I have some kind of diplomatic immunity," she tried.

But the policeman quickened his pace, forcing her to keep up.

Ana was running to catch them.

"Vanessa! Stop, Stop!" she heard Ana yell, but before Nessa could scream and struggle the cop twisted her arm behind her back, propelling her forward a few feet toward a shiny black SUV waiting at the end of a narrow lane. He yanked open the door and shoved her roughly inside. She could hear Ana hollering at them to stop.

There was no one in the back seat; a dark glass panel divided her and whoever was driving. Try as she might, she couldn't open the doors, nor would the windows budge. She hit her fists against the glass divide. "This is not the way to win friends and influence people!" she yelled in frustration. "Let me out—kidnapping is against the law." No one was listening. The car just kept driving through the streets. Nessa eventually sat back. "As long as I have a chauffeur, how about a tour of the movie stars' homes? Can we get drive-through? I could sure go for a burger and fries about now." When no one answered, she slumped back into the seat. "Bloody Americans," she grumbled, watching the city area start to dwindle out into suburbs; they too thinned as the car winded its way up into the hills, passing some large, expensive-looking homes. Funnily enough, as they turned and passed through a high-walled and heavily guarded gate, despite the danger she was in, all she could think about was how pissed Neman was going to be.



## **Chapter Eight**

How in all his long life had Slazzamar gone without this? He let out a groan, his hips bucking off the bed as Darren's talented tongue and mouth sucked on his cock, while one of his hands firmly but gently squeezed his balls. With every tender caress of his hands, mouth, even the way he used his soft, yet hard masculine body to make love to him, everything about this human was beautiful. All Slazzamar had ever done was take, fuck, get his own satisfaction, then leave.

Now, after several hours making love with this human, Slazzamar was stirred with very unfamiliar feelings of happiness and contentment. He knew he never wanted to let Darren go. Yet he couldn't keep him here—the Outer Realm was a dangerous place for a human, and Slazzamar had no desire to see him harmed.

"Oohh. beautiful boy." Slazzamar moaned his pleasure, slipping

his fingers through Darren's soft, dusty blond hair and cradling his head. Darren's eyes glanced up, and Slazzamar could see the smile in them. Darren drew in a deep breath, sucking harder. Slazzamar felt his climax building and sparking from the top of his brain, racing downwards. He closed his eyes, throwing his head back and roaring out at the sheer blinding pleasure, releasing into Darren's persistent mouth. Through the fog of his climax he heard Darren's own moan as he swallowed all his seed, making sure Slazzamar was clean before releasing his cock from his hot mouth. Slazzamar gripped Darren's shoulders, pulling him up into his arms, kissing him with tender passion. He tasted his own flavor in Darren's mouth, enjoying the combined tastes.

"To think I had to go to a whole new dimension to find the man of my dreams; I guess some myths are worth believing in after all," Darren said as he ran a lazy hand over Slazzamar's stomach and chest.

"Which myth would that be?"

"Love at first sight. The moment I saw you kicking the shit out of that garbage can, I fell in love with you."

"You love me?"

"Well, I sure don't love the garbage can." Darren chuckled.

Slazzamar couldn't believe this statement; no one loved Slazzamar. He pulled out of Darren's arms, climbing off his oval bed to pace around it.

"No one loves me; my demon father raped my mother and, when I was born, I was thrown on the garbage pile of the demon world. Do you know how hard it is with my appearance to live among demons? Demons only know malevolence and hate. You cannot love a demon, Darren."

Darren gave a snort and followed him off the bed, laying a hand on his shoulder. "I'm sorry for your past, Slazz. It's something no one can

change, but what we *can* do is move forward to better things. And if you haven't noticed by now, I am no demon, so I can love whomever I wish."

"Then you are a fool." He pushed him back, but Darren refused to be pushed away and gripped onto his arm.

"And just who brought me to this place? If you didn't feel anything for me at all, you would have let me walk right into Nessa's apartment and into great harm. You saved my life. I know you have a beating heart under this tough exterior, Slazz, a heart very capable of loving. You can deny it all you like, but the fact is I love you, and nothing's going to change that."

Slazzamar relaxed his grip, allowing Darren to slide his arms around him. He was fighting a losing battle and could not deny his feelings. "I'm a demon with a reputation, Darren." He raised his hand to gently cup Darren's face. "They call me Slazzamar the Sneak; no secret worth keeping can be kept by him, I have heard them say. I have more secrets locked away in here than the abyss of Hell." He touched his head. "Now that I have you, I can no longer be the creature I once was."

"This is a good thing, though—a change, a fresh start." Darren held his gaze.

Slazzamar shook his head. "Many will want me dead for what I know; it's not safe here." He gently pulled out of Darren's arms, walking to the window. "Even if I have these feelings for you, Darren, I cannot keep you. I may not be able to protect you from the evil which is coming."

"Don't you think that's my choice, Slazz?" Darren said, joining him at the window.

Overcome with these new feelings, Slazzamar grabbed Darren by the back of his neck, pulling him in close and claiming his mouth in a fierce, possessive kiss. "I cannot let you go, not now that I know what it feels like to love," he said, breathing in Darren's own breath. "It's time to

## Dangerous Moonlight by Angela Castle

---

make a choice and choose a side in the battle that is coming. Your friend will need you and I will need a powerful ally, so let's go see your friend."

A noise below made Slazzamar release Darren to glance down. Several demon soldiers were kicking down the outer door of his tower.

"Dress quickly." Slazzamar used his powers to summon his clothes.

"Gee, I wish I could do that." Darren was pulling on his white pants, searching for his shirt. He found the shredded cloth in the corner. Slazzamar had torn it from his body when they had first arrived in their haste to make love.

There was no time. Slazzamar seized Darren and let his power build, but it was too late—the soldiers crashed through his chamber door.

\* \* \* \* \*

The chair flew across the room, hitting the creature in the legs as he ran. Tripped, he crashed to the floor, his head spearing into the wall, creating a head-sized crater. Neman slapped his hands onto the demon's shoulders, yanking him backwards and into the other three demons he'd managed to subdue. Three others and two humans in the underground bar had managed to scramble out before Neman could nail their ass's to the wall. Whipping out his five-inch dagger, he held it to the demon's throat.

"C'mon, man, we don't hurt the humans—they come to us willingly," simpered the demon in Neman's grasp, his eyes glowing red behind the human disguise he wore.

"That's not why I'm here. I want to know how much information

has floated up already from the Lower Realm about the Chosen One.”

The demon gave an evil sneer. “The Chosen One is hot property, Hunter—the price on her head is almost unlimited. See for yourself.” His eyes glanced down to his jacket.

Neman pinned him, ripped open his jacket, pulling the paper from a pocket. Throwing the creature back against the wall as he unfolded it, he saw a printed picture of Vanessa. Written in ancient language very few humans could read, it stated that anyone who brought her dead or alive before any of the ruling Outer Realm rulers could name their price.

“Even the humans who serve us are hunting her.”

Although he wasn’t surprised, a dark rage ran through Neman at the news. His phone went off and he stepped back to answer it, never taking his eyes off the demons.

“Neman, it’s Carlo. Someone has snatched Vanessa in broad daylight.”

Neman snapped his phone shut and teleported out, reappearing right in front of a shocked and distressed Carlo. Neman sheathed his blade before thundering, “What part of ‘don’t let her leave the house’ didn’t you understand?”

“I’m sorry, Neman. Ana took her shopping; she didn’t think she was at risk.”

Neman shoved the paper he still gripped in his hand at him; the man paled further as he was able to read it.

“I want to know everything that happened.”

“Ana is on her way back to the house. She said she was approached by a cop who dragged Vanessa away to a waiting car. She took the registration number, and we’re already having it traced; I swear we’ll get

## Dangerous Moonlight by Angela Castle

---

her back safe, Neman.”

Fear ripped through Neman. Losing Vanessa was not an option. He couldn't blame Carlo or Ana; the fault was his for leaving her unguarded for too long. If she was in mortal company, it was more than likely she was still alive and within the state, but if they'd handed her over to any of the demons, she was as good as dead. Neman had to find her, and quickly.

Carlo's phone beeped, and he quickly answered it. "The car's been traced to a house in the Valley." He gave Neman the address.

Neman checked his blades and went to fetch his woman.

\* \* \* \* \*

A tall, elderly man, immaculately dressed in an expensive-looking gray suit, walked down a long open hall, his shoes squeaking on the polished white granite floor.

"There have been a few great blunders in history, and kidnapping me has just put you high on the list of being the greatest." Nessa stood with her hands on her hips, refusing to be intimidated by anyone, even by the man with the gun. Although it was tucked into a holster under his suit jacket, he had given her warning not to cause trouble before he let her out of the car. She had glared at him as he led her into the grand mansion.

"Oh my goodness," the elderly man said in an educated British accent. The soft wave of his gray hair matched the color of his suit. He had dark brown eyes and worry lines on his face. He waved her guard away, saying, "I am so sorry for your treatment, my dear. You were meant to be escorted here with extreme care and not manhandled by my staff. They

## Dangerous Moonlight by Angela Castle

---

shall be severely reprimanded for their actions.”

Nessa gave a casual shrug, now that she knew she wasn’t in any immediate danger.

“I am Professor Thomas Armod, leading archeologist and expert on all things Sumerian, Mesopotamian and Babylonian. I have been waiting for you, my dear, for a very long time.”

“Only thing an expert is, is a drip under pressure,” Nessa said dryly, unimpressed with his expertise. “So you know who I am then?”

“Oh yes, you are the Chosen One. It was unfortunate the way I came across the information concerning who you were.” He produced a sheet of paper with her picture on it.

She wasn’t able to read the strange text on the paper, but her photo horrified her. “Cripes, this is worse than my driver’s license. Where did you get this, and what does it say?”

“Dear Miss Myles, this is your Wanted poster. My staff found it on a dead demon.”

“Oh, not so good then.” She swallowed as a renewed wave of fear hit her. Neman had told her the truth about evil creatures wanting to kill her.

“This comes from the Lower Realm. I knew I had to get to you before they did; it was a miracle we found you here in L.A., as I had only sent word out to my people this morning with your picture. I brought you here for your own protection. The prophecy must be fulfilled as it is written; you and your child are very precious.” The words tumbled out in an excited tone, and his gaze was on her stomach. He reached out to touch her, and Nessa stepped back.

“Watch it, buddy—hands off the merchandise.”

## Dangerous Moonlight by Angela Castle

---

"Sorry. Please come this way and let me make you more comfortable. Are you hungry? I have an excellent chef on staff."

Still a little uncertain, Nessa followed him down the long hallway into a large office. Huge shelving lined one wall from top to bottom with all sorts of artifacts, books, clay tablets, pieces of statues, painted bowls and a host of other items displayed. A huge mural hung on the back wall, depicting a pyramid structure in the desert sand with a large silver moon shining down on it.

"That is a Ziggurat, the Moon Temple of Ur in Summer," Thomas explained, since she was staring at it so intently.

"Neman's temple?"

"Neman? Nanna was the Moon God of Ur."

"Yeah, I know, but he calls himself Neman now," she told him. "Never mind," she muttered, feeling rather tired.

"By your accent, I'm guessing you are Australian. This is something I did not expect." He offered her a seat.

"Yeah, well, just because we can't find three wise men and a virgin doesn't mean nothing special comes out of my country."

Instead of a laugh, Thomas looked perplexed. "Allow me to explain a few things, and clear up all this confusion. I come from a long line of prophets and priests going right back to the time of ancient Sumeria, the first one being Armod, the great prophet and priest. He served in the temples of the Moon and Sun Gods. It has been our duty to protect each prophecy which our ancestors have written down. It has been a long and heavy burden on my family. The Prophecy of the Prince was the last one uttered before Armod's death, and the last one to be fulfilled. And now here you are, the Chosen One. Can you tell me how he came to you? Did you see him? I hear most gods come to people in their dreams," he said



with great reverence.

"Uh, no, it wasn't a dream." There was no way she was giving details of her sex life to this man. "Have you been eating too many nuts off the crazy tree? Okay, so you're a priest and you want to see your ancestor's legacy through, that I can understand. But what I don't get is why you kidnapped me right away from your revered Moon God's own protection?"

"The great god Nanna? He himself protects you?"

"I didn't get pregnant by sitting on a toilet seat, and he's going to be one pissed-off god. Your Nanna is Neman, like I tried to tell you before. He's got a place right here in L.A."

The man went pale as he sat down behind his desk. "Oh, I did not know. Why would he walk among us? A god?" He looked confused. "If this is true, then I have violated the sacred trust of him whom I worship. I must return you right away!"

As he got up to reach for a phone, Nessa stood and walked over to the distressed man, patting him on the shoulder. "It'll be all right—it's just a little misunderstanding. As soon as Neman knows you had my best interests at heart, I'm sure he won't cut yours out. I'm guessing there's a lot you don't know about Neman, or Nanna. Things have changed a lot in several thousand years. You weren't to know your god changed his name." Sure, he was missing several fruit loops out of his bowl, but he seemed harmless enough.

The doors to the office burst open, and Neman stood there with a deadly-looking curved sword in his hand and a dark, dangerous scowl on his face. Nessa drew a sharp intake of breath; he looked just like an ancient warrior. Even with black jeans hugging his perfect ass, Neman was a perfect male specimen. His gaze swept over her and then Thomas, who looked shocked by his sudden appearance.

"Wow, you sure know how to make an entrance," said Nessa.

In a flash he had Thomas pinned to the wall with the sword at his throat. "Anyone who takes what is mine will pay," he said, growling at the poor professor. Thomas's eyes bulged in his head. He was clearly frightened by Neman's sheer power and strength.

"Hey, macho man, put him down right now. He didn't mean any harm." Nessa grabbed at his arm.

Neman dropped the man at his knees and stepped back.

"It's you, the great god Nanna. I beg your forgiveness; I did not know. I only wanted to protect the Chosen One, as it is my duty."

Neman's dark scowl turned into one of surprise. As his gaze scanned around the room, he glanced up at the mural of his Ziggurat, then back to Thomas. "You're a temple priest?"

"From the line of Armod, oh great god Nanna."

"I am Neman; no one calls me Nanna anymore." Neman gazed over at Vanessa. Her smile was one of amusement, and she gave her shoulders a shrug.

"Don't ask me—maybe you two should have a little chat, catch up on ancient history or something. As you can see, I'm fine. What I need is to use the bathroom, as this little blighter is playing havoc with my plumbing." She rubbed her stomach. "Which way?"

Thomas waved a shaky finger in the direction of a door, and Nessa skipped off, stopping to plant a kiss on Neman's shocked face before leaving the room.

## **Chapter Nine**

The demon guards shoved them both to their knees as Jezebel stepped down from her platform.

"I do believe you've been keeping information from me, Slazzamar." She glided around them. "And what is this, keeping company with mortals now? He'll make a nice meal for my loyal guards," she said, sparing Darren a glance.

"My Queen, no secrets do I keep from you—what worth is my information if incomplete?" Slazzamar kept his head held high, watching the demon queen closely. "As for the mortal, you know me; I will fuck any lowlife."

"Take the mortal away," ordered Jezebel. Slazzamar jumped to his feet, towering over Jezebel. The guards gripped his arms, and he struggled. "If you harm him, you'll be throwing away a great opportunity."

"Oh? Why do you believe this?"

Slazzamar had one trump card to play in order to keep Darren alive. "You think I've betrayed you, but you're wrong. This mortal is the Chosen One's most dear friend; if you kill him, you'd be destroying a valuable bargaining chip."

"Slazz, don't you dare," Darren hissed under his breath, an expression of betrayal etched across his handsome features.

Jezebel turned, with new interest, to look at Darren.

"I can use him to draw her out—there is no doubt she would do anything for her friend," Slazzamar added.

"You know the Chosen One, mortal?" Jezebel questioned, talking directly to Darren.

Darren glared at Slazzamar. "Unlike some people, I won't betray my friends and those I love," he snapped angrily.

The queen ignored him, looking back at Slazzamar. "And you know where she is?"

"I knew where she was until some of Belshazzar's idiot soldiers turned up and failed to do their job. That's when I found him. My methods may seem unhurried, but I always accomplish my goal. Without barging in and blundering about, the way to kill someone like the Chosen One is quietly and quickly."

"So aptly named, Slazzamar the Sneak." Jezebel waved her hand, and the guards released him.

"You used me," he heard Darren say under his breath.

Slazzamar steeled himself, turning with cold eyes on Darren. "I told you I was a demon, Darren."

## Dangerous Moonlight by Angela Castle

---

"Well, this is delightful; it seems I underestimated you again, Slazzamar."

"My Queen, I live to please you," he purred, hiding the hate for her churning in his gut. "The plan, my Queen, is to draw the Chosen One out where she is vulnerable and unguarded, which was working well until your guards burst in on us. How can I use him now he knows of my plan? At least he was an enjoyable fuck."

"You fucking bastard!" snarled Darren, trying to launch himself at Slazzamar. The guards held him back easily while Jezebel laughed.

"You are underhanded and evil; perhaps you should be in my employ full time."

"My Queen, as tempting as the offer is, I am too expensive to keep." Slazzamar had to think fast. "If you permit me, perhaps I can still salvage my mission. The mortal still may be of use; a word in private, if I may?"

Jezebel smiled evilly, crooking her long finger for him to follow. "Don't harm the human too much," she added to her guards as Slazzamar followed, fighting not to flinch when he heard Darren's flesh being struck and his resultant grunts of pain.

Slazzamar's brain raced to come up with a believable ploy to get Darren out of this place as quickly as possible. Once alone in Jezebel's chambers, Slazzamar ran his fingers along her arm, keeping up the pretense of still wanting her. She fluttered her eyes at him seductively. Slazzamar felt nothing for her. Once he had lusted after her perfectly formed body, but now she revolted him. "Sometimes, my Queen, being a half-breed has its advantages. I have the power to blindside the human. You will have the Chosen One within the next turn of the moon."

"This would fit in well with my plans. I need not bother with that fool Belshazzar, but what of Neman? How do you plan to deal with him?"

## Dangerous Moonlight by Angela Castle

---

“The problem with Neman is that he never goes out of his depth when dealing with any of our kind. Once you have the Chosen One, then he will blindly stumble into any nest of vipers to save her.”

She paced about the chamber, seemingly deep in thought. “I do like the way you think, Slazzamar. Go do this—bring the woman to me, and the rest will fall in place like a pack of cards.”

*Deck of cards, you idiot,* Slazzamar added silently. “I shall finish what I started, and kill that upstart god.”

He turned to leave, but Jezebel halted his progress. “If you fail to deliver, Slazzamar, no Realm is safe for you or anyone you’ve ever known. I will personally peel the skin from your flesh.”

Slazzamar knew Jezebel always followed through on her threats; there was no turning back now. He gave her a self-assured smile.

Darren was facedown on the stone floor. Keeping his pace casual, striding back into the chamber, Slazzamar hauled Darren to his feet. There was blood on his neck and his face was bruised. Even still, he struggled in his grasp. “Get away from me, you traitor.”

Slazzamar used his elfin powers to delve into Darren’s mind and force him into a deep sleep.

Darren slumped in his arms as he carried him out of range of Jezebel’s throne chamber to where he could teleport. He gave the queen a salute, charged his power and “popped” out.

\* \* \* \* \*

There was no way Neman was taking Vanessa back to L.A. He

would have Mark bring her belongings to the Zigg when he arrived.

It had been an interesting conversation with Thomas Armod, once the man had gotten over his initial fear of being in the presence of an actual god. He had begged Neman's forgiveness for taking Vanessa. Neman understood and was amazed at the survival of such a legacy. Neman remembered the old temple priest, but had been too caught up in his own affairs to notice he was a prophet of both Realms, or he would have certainly paid more attention to the man when he was alive. Thomas wanted to help and had a small army of men trained to fight demons at his disposal. Most of Neman's agents were spread out around the globe, and a handful were trained to fight non-human creatures. He could probably do with some extra protection for Vanessa from this human. The man would also be a good addition to the Moon Shadow Agency; he would have Mark contact him soon to talk business.

Vanessa was breathtaking in a pale blue dress that clung to her curves and highlighted her pale blue eyes. Her slightly tousled brown hair fell down around her back and over her shoulders. Their gazes met, a smile played upon her naturally pink lips, and Neman's cock hardened painfully. It was time to leave.

"All playing nice now?" She had come back into the room, and both men had risen from their seats.

"Come," Neman ordered, a little more harshly than he had intended. He opened his arms to her; for too long had she been out of them.

"Gee, anyone would think I was a pet the way he orders me about—come, stay, sit, roll over." Despite her longwinded protests, she went into his arms, her warmth seeping into him as she pressed her body against his side. Anchoring his arm tightly around her waist, Neman summoned his power and, in the next instant, they were in the corridor of his Ziggurat.

## **Dangerous Moonlight by Angela Castle**

---

"Wow, what is this place? I thought you were taking me back to your place in L.A.?" she said, still unfazed by being teleported.

"It's not safe for you there any longer. This is my home. I don't live in L.A.—it's just one of the few places I use when hunting in the country."

"One of the few; how many places have you got?"

"A half dozen or so scattered across different countries."

"You have some kind of network set up around the globe?"

"You could say that." Neman didn't want to talk about his hunting activities, or his agency. What he wanted was Vanessa naked under him. Taking her hand, he tugged her along the illuminated corridors.

"So where is this? Looks like some kind of mausoleum." She trotted along by his side.

"This is what remains of my Ziggurat."

"You mean like the picture on Armod's wall?" He let her go as she spun around. "But why does it feel damp and dark?"

"We are three hundred feet below ground in the Sumerian Dessert."

"We're in Iraq?"

"Bagdad is three hundred miles in that direction." He pointed to a stone wall.

"Why hasn't the U.S. bombed the crap out of you yet?"

Neman smiled. "My fortress is undetectable to humans."

"Aaahh, more godly magic, gotchya." She tapped her nose.



## Dangerous Moonlight by Angela Castle

---

"We are safe here for now, and you should not be able to get yourself into too much trouble in here."

"What do you mean 'get myself into trouble'? You're the one getting me into trouble."

Neman pushed open the heavy door of his chambers.

Vanessa ambled in, taking in the surroundings of his sparse bedchamber. A few weapons and shields decorated the windowless solid stone walls; his large bed was in the center of the room and a few wardrobes were in one corner. To the far end was a second door to the bathroom. Vanessa walked to the bedside lamp and tapped at the bulb. "How do you get power down here? You'd think for an ancient pyramid, there'd be flaming torches to light the way; oh, I do hope you have plumbing."

Neman closed the door, flicking on his security switch. "You don't remember this room, sweetness?" His lips twitched up into a smile at the memory of their first night together; it was something he would never forget.

She turned to gaze at him with mirth and mischief in her eyes. "No, but I'm going to take a wild guess and say this is the place where junior was conceived."

He gave her a wicked smile before stalking over to her as she stood by the bed. "Take off your clothes."

She raised her chin to his demand. "Has anyone ever told you how bossy you are? I guess being a god, no one tells you anything but 'yes, o mighty one.'"

"I've never known someone to talk so incessantly."

"Well, you're not the one..." She gasped at suddenly finding

herself naked.

Neman was through waiting; he had used his powers to teleport her clothes from her body.

"Better." His eyes hungrily took in her lush curves, also noting her lower stomach had started to swell slightly, pleasing him all the more. Neman dropped to his knees, his hands on her hips as he tenderly kissed her stomach. "All mine," he murmured against her soft skin. He slid his hands up to cup her full breasts, squeezing the gentle flesh and loving the way they filled his hands. He strummed her hardened nipples in between his thumb and forefingers, and she gave a soft moan as her fingers threaded through his hair. Neman could smell her arousal; it was a heady scent, her soft breath quickening.

"It seems an eternity since I had you last, Vanessa." He rose up, slipping his hands down to her waist. Lifting her up against him, he gripped onto her beautifully rounded ass, her legs automatically anchoring around his waist. In a flash, his clothes vanished. They were pressed flesh to flesh, his cock inches from her wet heat. His mouth sought her breast, sucking the flesh into his mouth, using his teeth to scrape against her nipple. Without any preamble he lowered her onto his aching cock; her tight sheath stretched around him, welcoming him home. Releasing her breast with a soft "plop," he lavished the same attention on the other breast.

"Ooh, Neman," she moaned breathlessly as he filled her, until he could go no farther.

"Yes, sweetness, you are made for this, made for me." He lifted her, almost withdrawing all the way, then plunging back in. She gasped and panted, clinging to him as he set a steady rhythm. Careful not to break them apart, he shifted their position and set her down on the bed, never stopping his intense, penetrating thrusts. She tugged at his shoulder and licked her lips. Neman closed his mouth over hers, scraping her lower lip

between his teeth, before thrusting his tongue deep into her mouth, kissing her with a deep, intense passion. She held nothing back from him, instead giving him everything she was; it was truly a beautiful thing. He angled his hips to hit just at the right spot within her, quickening his pace. She was wild beneath him, her pale painted fingernails clawing at his shoulders; her heels dug into the flesh of his back as she arched, trying to take more of him. Holding her tightly, he hammered home time and time again until she let out a rapturous scream of pleasure, trembling and quaking in his arms.

Neman gritted his teeth; her hot sheath squeezing and spasming around him had him on the edge. He held on for as long as he was able to push her further, straining to hold back his own impending climax until he heard her come again. As a fertility god, he had a reputation to uphold. He reached down between their bodies, his fingers finding the ultra-sensitive swollen pink nub, giving it a gentle pinch between his thumb and forefingers. Vanessa started to sob beneath him, begging him both to stop and to keep going. Her whole body shaking, she screamed ecstatically once again. It was then he let go, feeling the intense power charge through him, more extreme than that of a god bolt. Multicolored lights exploding behind his eyes. Neman threw back his head as a deep, guttural groan tore from his throat and his seed spilled forth into her depths. As though he'd been struck by lightning, in that moment he knew the greatest power and curse no man or god could ever control: he loved Vanessa. Never had he even loved his wife with such intensity as he did this frail mortal woman. She was still panting, her eyes closed, as he slowly withdrew from her heat, lying down on the bed to pull her into his arms.

"Is that one of your great powers?" Vanessa opened her eyes just a crack to peer at him, a sleepy, well-sated smile upon her lips.

"Which power, sweetness?"

"The power to render me utterly useless."

## Dangerous Moonlight by Angela Castle

---

Neman chuckled. "Glad to know I please you." She reached out to touch his face. As her pale blue eyes regarded him, he wanted to know the depths of her thoughts; he wanted to know everything about this woman who had managed to capture his heart so easily. "What goes through that beautiful head of yours, sweetness?" He captured her pale hand in his darker-skinned large one, turning it over to kiss her palm.

"I know nothing about you; Ana said some things that made me curious."

He could see the questions in her eyes. "Ask any question you like; I promise to give you truthful answers. But be warned, I too have questions for you."

"What could you possibly want to know of me?"

Neman shifted back between her legs, keeping the bulk of his weight off her. "Oh, a great many things, but ask your questions first." She was silent for a long moment; he could almost hear her mind ticking over, absorbing everything he'd said to her. She drew in a long breath, and Neman enjoyed watching the rise and fall of her chest.

"Why don't you start with why you're a god who's not; what made you turn to hunting demons?"

Of course she would pick the one question which pained him the most, but if he had a chance to win her heart, then she should know the truth. "Four thousand years ago was a different time from now. The gods were openly worshipped and walked among the humans. We all have some power to perform a cosmic function. I made sure the moon rose to light up the night, to measure time, and to provide fertility."

She raised an eyebrow, her expression changed to one of disbelief. "Not to sound doubtful, but modern science has kind of blown the theory that gods make things work out the window."

“Are you going to let me finish?” he said in a teasing tone.

Vanessa made a show of zipping up her mouth.

Neman chuckled again. “Your modern science is nearly correct—it’s more like a linking of forces which help us control a number of things, but I do not wish to get bogged down in the ways of the gods. I had a mortal wife, Ningal; she was the daughter of the king and priestess in my temple, given to me as an offering. Together we had two children, Inanna and Iskur. It happened the day before the festival of the New Year and New Moon. The offerings poured into all the temples. As a priestess and my wife it was, Ningal’s duty to take the choice of the offerings for our family to feast upon. The festival, dancing and music was lively, and without a thought or care I took of everything which was given. What I didn’t know was that my food was tainted; it takes a powerful drug to knock out a god. I can assume it was in the wine, as I had taken a few sips just before I was overcome. When I came to, I felt my powers being drained by a powerful demon. I was unable to focus on who or what type of demon it was, but I managed to stop it before it drained me completely. Still, the damage had been done. I had retained some basic powers, I had my strength, but the demon had escaped before I could do anything. Losing my powers was nothing compared to what I found when I stumbled into my temple. There on the floor were the bodies of my wife and two innocent children.”

Vanessa gave a soft gasp. “I’m so sorry, Neman.”

“I went to my family, but they turned their backs on me. My brother Sin would help only once I had given him my title. He took over the role of Moon God, sunk my Ziggurat below the surface and placed a protection spell upon it. It was all he would do; my life became one of revenge. I became a skilled hunter and killer, taking great pleasure in each demon I killed, hoping to find the one demon that had destroyed my life and family.” He drew in a deep breath. “You see, Vanessa, I am a killer. My whole existence until now has been one long quest for bloody

vengeance.”

There was no condemnation in her eyes, just a gentle compassion that twisted at his heart. Her fingers reached up, running tenderly across his cheek and jaw. “Maybe so, but there is something called a ripple effect. You may call it vengeance, but you have been saving lives with every evil creature you kill—a few thousand years can add up to hundreds of thousands of people you have saved. You’re a hero, Neman, not some mindless killer. You saved my life and have given me something I never thought I could have or be. The doctors told me when I was still young that I could never have children.”

Neman buried his face in her hair, holding her close to his heart. Vanessa possessed an inner strength, a giving heart and a deep capacity for love. He didn’t deserve a woman like her, yet he could not deny himself either. Every inch of his soul craved her, not just for now, but for eternity. His possessiveness raged full to the surface; she was his, and no one would take her from him. He raised his head and gently kissed her forehead, his body throbbing. He had grown hard again, wanting to have her. “I guess being a fertility god was good for something after all.”

A smile touched the corner of her pink lips.

“The fates have brought us together, sweetness, and I’m not ashamed to say this pleases me. You’ve brought a light into my life, Vanessa, that has been missing for a very long time.”

“Man or god, I don’t care, but what I do know is there is goodness inside you, and I know you’re going to be a great father to our baby. I will stay with you for as long as I’m needed, because I understand it’s this anointing thing which makes you want me.”

Hearing those last few words made Neman scowl. “No.” Neman’s possessive instinct made him pull her tighter against him. “Have you not noticed the strong scent is fading, sweetness? The anointing lasts but a few days. It’s like striking flint against the rock—there is that first spark,

## **Dangerous Moonlight by Angela Castle**

---

but sometimes, rarely, those sparks can create an eternal fire if you find just the right tinder to fan it. You have changed everything for me. Vengeance doesn't rule me anymore; you've broken my curse, my sweet Vanessa. I'm going to want you for eternity."

## **Chapter Ten**

What does a girl say to that? He may be a god, but like any man he was capable of hate, vengeance, compassion and love. He had been alone for so long, Nessa's heart broke for what he had suffered. She knew she was worthy of him; he had helped her find that worth, and she cherished him for it. There was vulnerability in his golden eyes, as if he was waiting for something from her. But having him on top of her, the heat of his body pressed against hers, made her lose her tongue. As a general rule, Nessa was never at a loss for words, yet over the past few days she had found herself lacking whenever he got close. There was no way of ever living a normal life again. The plain and simple fact was that she loved him, and had done so from the moment he'd ducked the vase she had thrown at Larry. A fear stole over her—should she tell him? What was the worst that could happen? Her heart torn utterly apart? As carefree as she might think she was, this man could easily break her. She took a deep breath to steel herself for the confession of love. "Neman, I..."



A loud beeping made him practically leap off her and the bed.

With a sigh, she rolled to her side to watch him walk to a panel she hadn't noticed in the wall by the door. She licked her lips as she was treated to a splendid view of his naked back; those broad muscled shoulders, the perfect hollow line of his spine that lead down to the best-looking ass she'd ever seen.

He jabbed at the button.

"You'd better get out here—your elf has just turned up with an injured man," a male voice informed him.

Nessa sat up, looking about for her clothes, which were once again nowhere in sight. She sighed, ripped the sheet off the bed and wrapped it around her body. She was becoming quite apt at making it fit like a toga, not to mention she was beginning to suspect Neman liked keeping her naked in bed. "Did someone say elf?"

Neman flicked a switch, pulling open the door. "Stay here." In a flash his clothes reappeared on his body.

Nessa rolled her eyes, annoyed with his over-protectiveness. "Look here, god-boy, I'm not a pet you can order about. I am not staying in your bedroom." She followed him out into the corridor. "You said I was safe here."

"You are, but if this is the elf I think it is, it could mean trouble."

"C'mon, I've never met an elf. Anyway, that fellow said someone was injured."

Neman let out an exasperated huff and opened his arms.

"Shortcut." Nessa grinned, jumping into his arms. Every time he teleported her, she got a brief dizzying buzz from it. After feeling his power surge, then the "pop," they stood in a large open square where a

central wide staircase joined the two levels of this ancient Ziggurat. It had darkened doorways around the square on both levels, with markings carved into every wall. A tall, middle-aged man in jeans and black T-shirt stood over another man with silvery white hair that flowed down his back. Nessa could only assume he was the elf. He was cradling a third man in his arms, and Nessa stepped forward to get a closer look.

“Slazzamar,” growled Neman, obviously displeased to see him.

Shock and horror ran through Nessa when she saw who it was the elf had in his arms. “Darren!” She ran forward, dropping to her knees. “What did you do to him?” He was half naked, barefoot, had bloody bite marks on his neck, and his face looked bruised.

“He’ll be all right—I had to make him sleep.” The one called Slazzamar crooked his head to look at her.

Strangely, Nessa could see worry on the elf’s delicate features. “I want water, bandages, antiseptic, and help me get him to a bed,” Nessa snapped, pulling Darren from the elf’s arms.

Neman grabbed hold of the elf creature, yanking him back rather roughly. “What have you done Slazzamar?” Neman demanded, as the fellow in the T-shirt knelt down on the other side of Darren. “Looks like mainly flesh wounds; I keep a first-aid kit in the kitchen.”

She nodded at the handsome man with gray eyes and brown hair. He dashed off through one of the doors.

“Neman, help me move him, please.”

\* \* \* \* \*

Neman released Slazzamar, coming over to pick Darren up and carrying him through a second door down a short wide corridor into a room that was much like Neman's, only more sparse. He laid him down on the bed.

Slazzamar leaned against the door. "We have to talk, Neman."

Neman looked up at Slazzamar's solemn face—something was up with him. He waited until Mark came back through the door. "Stay with them," he ordered. Mark nodded.

"You, weapons room now." He teleported out, and Slazzamar appeared a few seconds behind him.

"I found him the night the Shadows Warriors came after your Chosen One," Slazzamar began.

"What game have you been playing, Slazzamar?"

"There is no game anymore, Neman. I can't go back to the Lower or Outer Realms any longer. When Jezebel finds out I've lied though my teeth just to get Darren out of there, she'll be after my blood."

"What makes you think I won't be too? You put Vanessa's life and her friend's life at risk." Neman approached him.

Slazzamar stood his ground, unwavering. "I never told anyone I knew where she was. As for Darren, if I had not taken him, Belshazzar's Shadow Demons would have killed him."

Neman was suspicious of his motives. "What is it you want, Slazzamar?"

"I've had enough of being everybody's whipping boy; I want out of this game, Neman." He stepped closer to him. "I will fight for it if I have to. All I ask for is sanctuary; in return you have my allegiance, loyalty and every piece of dirt I know on all the Lower Realm rulers."

This was something Neman hadn't expected of Slazzamar. He had always known him to be such a self-absorbed creature, only out to serve his own interests.

"Tell me what you know and I will consider it." To Neman trust was something to be earned, not bartered for.

Slazzamar sighed, walked over and sat down on the stone steps.

"Jezebel and Belshazzar have teamed up against you, and as far as I know two other rulers also want to stop the prophecy. They are pulling together every resource they have; this is turning into a full-on war. It's only a matter of time before they attack. In the Outer Realm, although they know of the prophecy, I doubt they will lift a finger to help. They have been battling against the demons long enough and are sitting back to see what happens. I can't get close enough to the elves to find out what they're doing." The elves had been the main guardians fighting and killing demons in the Outer Realm. Without their efforts, the Outer Realm would have been overrun.

Neman let out a slow breath, weighing up the odds against them. Without his powers, and as skilled as he was with his blades, there was no way he could defeat an army that large without help. "Will you fight with us?"

"I will do what I have to do, even if it means death in battle."

Neman wondered what had happened to the half-breed to bring about such a change in him.

"Forgive me, but there is something else you should know, something I have known for a long time now. I discovered it was Jezebel who stole your god powers, Neman; she wears them around her neck in a blue jewel. She meant to kill you that night in your temple after striking a bargain with the king. She used your Ningal to lace wine with the drug they used to subdue you, making her believe she could gain immortality if

your powers had been stripped.”

At first Neman was stunned by the news that his own wife had betrayed him. Neman grabbed the elf by his shirt. He shook with a deadly rage. “How do you know this?”

“I’ve fucked Jezebel enough for her to boast to me about how she turned the great Moon God into a mere pittance of a creature.”

“I’m going to kill her.” Tossing Slazzamar aside, he started selecting weapons from his collection, his sharpest, deadliest blades.

Slazzamar jumped up, grabbing hold of his arm.

He threw the elf-demon off.

Slazzamar stumbled backwards. “That’s exactly what she wants you to do—go charging in half-cocked and vulnerable. Do you want to leave Vanessa unprotected for Jezebel to kill after she’s finished you off?”

If he hadn’t already fallen in love with Vanessa he would have ignored the elf’s advice and stormed off, but the mere mention of her name seemed to calm him. He looked at Slazzamar. He drew in a deep breath to calm the rage inside.

“Sanctuary is yours; I do not know how much protection I can offer, considering the odds. But why this? Why now?”

Slazzamar cocked his head to the side. “You’re not the only one who knows love, Neman.”

It was then Neman understood Slazzamar’s motives. He’d been bitten by the curse as well.

\* \* \* \* \*

Mark Remano had introduced himself as Neman's right-hand man, the person who managed all of Neman's Ziggurat and demon-hunting affairs. Together they had cleaned Darren up and bandaged the wounds on his neck.

"Why are you wearing a sheet?"

"Because I'm starting a new fashion trend," Nessa snapped, a little harder than she had intended to. "Sorry," she mumbled.

"It's okay—you must be in a bit of trouble to have Neman bring you here."

"You could say that."

"Are you and he, um, you know...?"

"What, screwing each other's brains out? Gee, what gave that away—the fact that I'm only wearing one of his bed sheets?" Nessa wasn't in the mood to play twenty questions; she was too worried about Darren. Slowly he started to come round.

"Hey, Darren, how are you feeling?" Nessa brushed the hair out of Darren's face as she sat beside him on the bed.

"Like I was a chew toy for a bunch of twisted demons," he croaked. "What a nightmare."

"It's okay, you're safe now. I've been out of my mind with worry for you. What the heck happened?"

Darren sat up in a panic. "That lying bastard, you can't let him near you, he's in league with that demon queen, they're going to kill you." He gripped her shoulders.

"Calm down, Darren. Who is in league with the demon queen?"

\* \* \* \* \*

"That would be me." Everyone swiveled around to face him. Slazzamar stood in the doorway, his eyes fixed on Darren.

"You!" Darren's angry tone was unmistakable. He pushed his friend back in a protective gesture, leaping off the bed and placing himself between Slazzamar and the Chosen One. "You can't have her." Anger flashed in Darren's beautiful hazel eyes.

Despite what Jezebel's guards had done to him, his cheeks were flushed in rage, making Slazzamar want him. Slazzamar gave him a half smile. "It's not her I want." He looked past Darren to the other two. "Nessa, Mark, would you give us a moment alone, please?" He saw Vanessa's eyes widen with surprise, glancing between them, as she realized what was going on.

"Oooh, I see." Diplomatically Darren's friend got to her feet, grabbing hold of Mark's arm. "Come on, take me to the big guy, will you; god or not, he owes me some clothes."

"You know about that?" Mark was asking Nessa as they headed for the door.

Slazzamar stepped aside to let them pass, closing the door behind them. He turned to face Darren again.

"You're nothing but a selfish, no good user! How did I ever fall in love with such a two-faced lying bastard? You might as well just cut out my heart, hurting me the way you did," Darren raged.

"Well, that's just too damn bad, Darren!" Slazzamar snapped with such force that it made Darren take a step backwards, his leg hitting the bed, making him fall onto his rear. "What would you have rather me done? Spare your feelings or let you die? I did what I had to do to save you, and I'm not about to apologize for it." Darren looked confused, so Slazzamar gave him a few moments to let the information sink in.

Darren looked up at him. "Y...you weren't just using me?"

Slazzamar shook his head. "I love you, as crazy as it is to love a mortal. I would lie, steal and kill for you, and there is nothing I wouldn't do to see you safe, even if it means leaving you here and never seeing you again, I will do it." Slazzamar waited for what seemed an eternity for Darren to say something. His heart sank in his chest as he just sat there.

Finally, Slazzamar turned his back and made to leave. But before he could reach for the door, Darren gripped his shoulder, spinning him around, pulling his head down, and their lips met in a heated kiss. Slazzamar pulled Darren tight against his body.

"I love you too, baby," Darren whispered as he pulled Slazzamar's head back, looking into his eyes. "I'm sorry for accusing you; my heart more often than not rules my head. Can you forgive my stubbornness?"

"Sweet boy, there is nothing to forgive. I remember you once saying we can't change the past, only look forward to a better future."

Darren smiled against his lips. "Well, let's start with making a few pleasurable memories."

Tugging him backwards towards the bed, Slazzamar already knew what Darren wanted. He took hold of his wrists and pushed him down onto the bed, pinning him to it in a dominant move. Darren instantly responded, and the arousal coursing through them heated. It was then Slazzamar did what he had wanted to do but had been too afraid to until now.



## Dangerous Moonlight by Angela Castle

---

"You are mine, Darren Claymore." He bit down on his neck, claiming him for eternity.

\* \* \* \* \*

Nessa grinned as she turned away from the door. Mark was leaning up against the wall with his arms folded.

"Been eavesdropping, sweetness?" Neman's arms slid around her waist from behind her, his large hands caressing her stomach.

"Jesus, Mary and Joseph!" she exclaimed in fright. "Will you stop jumping out of shadows at me; I was just making sure all was well with Darren. Who knew? In love with an elf, or is it demon—oh hell, I don't know, what exactly do you call him anyway?"

"Trouble most of the time; stranger things have happened, though. Slazzamar surprised the hell out of me." Neman chuckled. "Do you know how sexy you look and smell right now?" Growling softly, he bent to lick the shell of her ear as Nessa melted in his arms.

"Not a clue; why don't you show me?" Nessa was trying not to giggle like an idiot as he assaulted the side of her neck with his lips.

"With pleasure, my lady." He bent, sweeping his arm under her knees to lift her up. His mouth claimed hers in a deep, possessive kiss as he carried her down the corridor past a stunned-looking Mark.

"Typical—everyone gets laid around here but me," Nessa heard him grumble.

## **Chapter Eleven**

Vanessa's laughter echoed through the hallways of the Ziggurat; it was strange to have a woman here after thousands of years. Vanessa, Darren and Slazzamar had gone to the kitchen, while Neman and Mark were in the library that doubled as an office. Mark sat at his desk, a wall of computerized equipment before his fingertips and eyes.

"Are you going to tell me what's going on? What this Chosen One business is all about? I only just found these." He tossed Vanessa's Wanted poster onto his desk. Neman was reading through the reports of the demon activities sent in by his teams from different countries around the world; the activity and sightings of Outer Realm creatures had jumped dramatically in the past twenty-four hours. "Pregnant women are being targeted all over. I've never seen the likes of it. Our resources are stretched fighting demons and protecting these women. I've had to call in every favor I have to help keep the demon attacks under control."

"They're looking for Vanessa. She is the Chosen One anointed by the gods to bear the prince who will heal the rift allowing the demons to leak through into both the Outer and Human Realms."

"That wouldn't be a bad thing; it would sure make our lives easier on the hunting front. I might get to finish my holiday and get laid."

Neman ignored his last comment.

"So she's pregnant with your baby? But you don't have any powers; how will your child have any as well?"

"He will," Neman assured him. He said it in such a matter-of-fact way, Mark paused from his typing, a smirk on his face.

"Why, you old goat, still got it, eh? I was wondering if you ever got laid, now I know—been hanging out for your Chosen One?"

"Shut up, Mark. I need you to go run a few errands; it's too dangerous to let Vanessa out of the Zigg."

Mark sighed, sitting back in the black leather office chair. "Are you making me fetch-boy for your woman now?" he asked indignantly.

Even if he was, Neman knew Mark would do anything he asked of him, as his loyalty ran deep. "No, Mark, I need you to go to L.A. There's a man there by the name of Thomas Armod; he's a temple priest. Give him the list of domestic things; he will also be a good resource to bring into the agency. Contact Mona and get her to stock up on extra food, and collect Vanessa's belongings and anything she wants from the L.A. branch. Then do a weapons run—I want anything and everything available to kill demons."

"What can I do?" Slazzamar was leaning against the doorjamb, his arms folded over his chest.

"I have to leave the Zigg; it's time to catch up with some family. As

the only non-human with powers, I want you to guard Vanessa and her friend. Nothing is to get past the dimension gate. We have to prepare for every kind of attack and contingency."

"Got ya, boss." Mark grabbed pen and paper as he headed out.

Neman crossed the library floor to Slazzamar. "I am trusting you with Vanessa; don't let me down, Slazzamar." With that he "popped" out.

\* \* \* \* \*

"It's been a crazy couple of days." Nessa scooped a spoonful of ice cream into her mouth. She and Darren sat in a fully modern kitchen surrounded by thick, ancient stone walls, three-hundred feet below the earth's surface. Tired of wearing a bed sheet, she had threatened to walk around naked in front of everyone. Neman had then magically made her blue dress reappear.

"You're telling me, honey. Slazz took me to the Other or Outer Realm; it's kind of like stepping several hundred years back in time, though I didn't see much past Slazz's bedchamber." He cracked a wicked grin. "Hmmm, does that man know how to fuck."

"Hey, we got matching hickies," Nessa pointed out, after spotting the fresh bruise on the side of Darren's neck.

They grinned at each other before bursting out laughing. It took a moment for them to calm down. Darren was looking much better, showered and wearing a fresh set of clothes that Mark had lent him before showing them to the kitchen. They had devoured a large plate of bread, cheese, meats and fruits, before moving onto the ice cream they had found in the freezer.

"You know your Slazz is technically not a man," Nessa pointed out.

Darren gave her a pointed stare. "I don't care—he's all mine. Your scrummy man isn't human either. So do you love him?" Darren was licking the back of his spoon.

"Well, it's complicated; we're having a baby, and well...I think I do."

"Oh honey, you've got it bad, I can tell. Don't worry—these things have a way of working themselves out."

Nessa gave a snort. "Yeah, if I don't get murdered before then."

Darren shook his head, dipping his spoon back into the ice cream and licking it off again. "You always did know how to get yourself into trouble."

Nessa glared resentfully at Darren. "Why does everyone keep saying that I get into trouble!" She waved her spoon at him. "If I have to blame anyone, it's Larry; if that two-faced son-of-a-motherless-goat hadn't cheated on me, we'd still be living relatively ordinary lives."

A "pop" sounded, making everyone jump.

"Lord Almighty, that popping in and out these creatures do has frazzled my nerves. Don't you ever do any walking?" Nessa asked.

Slazzamar casually leaned on the kitchen counter, right next to Darren. "It's quicker."

"Ice cream?" Darren offered his spoon to his lover, but Slazzamar just leaned forward, boldly running his tongue around Darren's lips.

"Nice," he said in a husky tone.

Darren looked dazed, and Nessa gave a sigh. "Cute." She smirked

at them. "Get a room, will ya?" She scooped another spoonful into her mouth, pleased to see her best friend so happy.

Slazzamar straightened up to look at her, and Darren had a stupid I'm-so-in-love grin on his face.

"Neman's gone for a while, Mark's running errands, so it's just us three for now."

"Hang about—how does Mark get in and out of this place? Can he teleport like you do?"

Slazz shook his head. "There is a dimension gate at the front of the Ziggurat. You place a key in it and it will open to different places around your Human Realm."

"Neat-o."

Darren and Slazz glanced at each other as if they wanted to spend some more time alone. Not that she could blame them—she felt the same way about Neman. "Now I feel like a third wheel. Anyone want to play spin the bottle?" Nessa said with a fun grin.

"Nessa!" snapped Darren.

"What's spin the bottle?" Slazz asked, cocking his head to the side with a puzzled look.

"A stupid game that always ends in disaster."

"Does not."

"Does too; remember the last time we played it, that night out with you, Larry, me and Bob, Tracy and Doug from Accounts?"

"That wasn't a disaster—you found out Bob wasn't gay, and Tracy got a nice ménage happening."

“Which left me alone.”

“Well, it’s better than being stuck with that two-timing weasel,” she muttered.

“You’re not alone anymore,” Slazz said, looking confused by their conversation.

“Thanks, baby.” Darren kissed Slazz lovingly.

“So where’s the big guy gone? Are you really an elf, and are all elves gay? Got any magic tricks?”

Slazzamar was staring in bewilderment at her rapid-fire questions.

Darren laughed. “Oh, this is going to be fun.”

\* \* \* \* \*

In the penthouse of the Moon Temple Casino in Las Vegas, Neman materialized. His twin owned and operated the large casino; it seems some gods just can’t go without being worshipped in some way, and living in a very tall building. In this age most of the remaining gods dwelt in temples in the “Heavenly Realm” and mainly kept out of human affairs, but gods like his flashy brother loved to live with the pleasures created by the descendents of those who once worshipped him.

“Well, look what a prophecy dragged in—was wondering how long it would take you to get around to me.” Sin sat casually with his feet up on a large, shiny black office desk. Behind him through the large clear window shone the glittering lights of his city, the city of Sin. Little did the humans know he had played a major role in helping them create the city for the express purpose of his own amusement. Sin was immaculately

dressed in an expensive suit, his hair clipped short in a modern style.

“Did everyone know about this prophecy but me?”

“That’s what you get for spending a few thousand years with your head stuck in the sand and your balls deep in demon blood.”

“I didn’t come here to reminisce with you, Sin; I want the sword and shield of Anu. I know Father gave them to you.”

“A god without powers can be a bigger pain than one with. It’s always give me, help me, I want.” Sin lowered his legs to the floor, pushing back his chair to rise to his full height and stare into his twin’s golden eyes. “You know how the game is played, brother; I can’t give you anything without getting something in return.”

Neman could feel the power emanating from him. He bristled at the thought of having to perform a worship ritual to his brother. “Name your price, Sin. I have already given you my temple and title.”

“It took them eighty years to rebuild a new temple after I sank yours, and I was in it twice before the Babylonians conquered the area. No, this time I want the ritual; it has been way too long since I had a proper worshipper, and never one that wasn’t a human.”

Neman clenched his fists, fighting back his anger and pride. “Jezebel was the one who stole my powers, and I need the armor and sword to retrieve them; it’s the only chance I have of protecting Vanessa.”

Sin ran a hand through black hair. “That evil bitch has done more rounds than one of my roulette wheels, but if you manage to regain your powers, what will you do?”

“This is no longer our age, Sin; they don’t need gods. The people do well enough worshipping a host of self-invented gods. All I wish to do is take care of what I do have and see that my son is raised well.”



Sin clicked his fingers, and Vanessa's Wanted poster appeared in his hand. Sin glanced over it. "I see they chose someone for her virtue rather than her beauty."

Neman's temper flared; he was quick to grab his brother and throw him against the wall. Sin made no attempt to throw him off. "Never insult Vanessa. I may not have all my powers, but I'm still strong enough to beat your smug ass into the ground!" he growled. "She has more beauty than any of the whores you've ever had."

"Easy, brother, I meant no ill will. It looks like it's more than just an anointing that has you fired up."

Neman released him, bringing his temper under control.

Sin proceeded to straighten his clothes and brush himself down. "I'm sure she's the very picture of beauty. I'm just grateful the prophecy refers to you and not me; I'm still having too much fun to be tied down with a wife and child." Despite his cavalier expression, there was wistfulness in Sin's tone.

Sin's words made an imprint in Neman's mind; he loved Vanessa, and there was no reason not to bind her to him permanently. It would be the first thing he would do when he regained his powers, defeated the Realm rulers, and stopped them coming after Vanessa. He would take her as his new bride and make her immortal.

"The sword and shield, Sin."

"The rites, Nanna."

Neman hated when his godly title was used. Swallowing what was left of his pride, he pulled a concealed blade from behind his back.

Sin watched through narrow eyes. "Is she worth this humiliation, Nanna?" he asked.

## **Dangerous Moonlight by Angela Castle**

---

Neman proceeded to cut his hand open; he watched his blood flow out, dripping down between his fingers. Neman looked his brother straight in the eye. "Yes, she is." He knelt before his brother and began a blood rite worship.

## **Chapter Twelve**

They had been wandering around the Ziggurat for what seemed like hours; the place seemed to stretch on for miles, with stairs in all directions, all ending back in the main courtyard.

"This place is huge," said Nessa.

They stood outside, glancing upwards into the expanse of the underground cavern the Ziggurat sat in.

"I believe the main living quarters are confined to the lower two levels of the temple. The main Moon temple is up there." Slazzamar pointed to the long staircase that seemed to just keep going.

"Is that where they used to worship him?" Nessa asked.

"I believe so."

"I want to see." She started up the steps while Slazzamar and Darren cheated by teleporting to the top.

"Sure, leave the pregnant woman to climb the steps."

Slazzamar frowned, "popped" in by her side, and the next moment she was up at the top of the fifty feet of stairs. Strangely enough she didn't get the same kind of buzz when Slazzamar teleported her.

"What are all these pictures and symbols?"

"I don't read ancient Sumerian," Slazzamar told Nessa.

She was gazing at the temple doors. "Well, you're just full of historical information, aren't you; how old are you anyway?"

"In human terms, eight hundred and sixty."

"You don't look a day over a hundred," Darren said with a smile. "I'm just amazed this place has survived for this long; all the modern upgrades must have cost a fortune."

"I want to know how it got so far underground," said Nessa.

"From what I know, and it isn't much, after Neman lost his powers the earth opened up and swallowed the temple whole."

"Sounds just like an earthquake to me," Nessa said as Slazzamar pushed open the temple doors.

"There is no power up here," Slazzamar said as he walked along the side of the wall. Nessa couldn't see what he was doing in the dark. Then something suddenly sparked and flames shot out of a handheld torch. He moved across the hall and placed the flames into a long narrow channel. A wall of flame and light suddenly raced along the side of the temple, lighting it up.

Nessa and Darren gasped in unison at the long narrow temple.

"Wow, they sure didn't do anything small in their day," Darren said. To his right were hundreds of little statues of people holding out their hands, or else they had them clasped in front of them, their eyes wide open in seeming reverence. He gingerly picked one up.

"Worshippers," Slazzamar explained. "When they couldn't be in the temple, they left these to show their devotion."

"A clay fan club."

"This is an archeologist's wet dream," Nessa said, gazing at all the brightly painted pictures of the moon in different stages in the sky with crops and animals below in the fields as their God blessed them. Nessa moved forward, her eyes now fixed on the massive statue of Neman at the back of the temple.

"By the look of all the dust, I don't think anyone has been up here in a while." Darren was moving about to look at different objects that lay about.

"Well, they got the bigness about right," she smirked, eyeing the effigies of the phallic symbol displayed.

Darren chuckled.

Nessa looked down at the dusty temple floor, remembering what Neman had said about his family being slaughtered here. She didn't understand why he would choose to live under the place of such a tragedy for so long; maybe it was the fuel to the fire that drove him on, to keep him hunting and killing demons. Her heart ached for the pain and anguish he must have felt in that moment, a whole life snatched away in an instant. She kind of knew the feeling; her whole life had been taken away from her too. She'd been thrust into a world of strange, dangerous creatures, the pawn in some bigger game. "I've seen enough." Nessa

turned, retracing her steps out through the temple doors.

"You all right?" Darren came up beside her. "Your forehead always creases when you think too hard."

"Does not."

"Does too."

"Oh, blow it out your ass," she huffed.

"Gladly, honey," Darren smirked back.

Nessa gave him a smile and started down the steep stairs, refusing Slazzamar's offer to teleport her down.

Slazzamar showed them to a large room full of computers, books, comfortable chairs, several large rugs on the stone floor and a mini-bar to one end.

Darren headed over to the bar, starting to mix a drink.

"I want one too; it's been forever since I had a drink," said Nessa, looking hungrily at the bar.

"Honey, the last time you drank, look what happened. Anyway, it's no good for the little tike. Want a drink, Slazz?"

Nessa pouted. "Spoilsport."

"I do not drink human drinks," Slazzamar said.

"What do you drink then?"

"My half demon side requires small amounts of blood on occasion."

Both Darren and Vanessa stared at him. Darren touched the bruise

on his neck.

“That was for a bonding,” Slazzamar said in a low tone to Darren.  
“So any creature will know whom you belong to.”

Darren smiled at him.

Nessa was glad Neman wasn't the only possessive being around, and Darren looked happy at the fact that Slazzamar had claimed him.

“Good to know.”

“I will try one; what do you like?” he was asking Darren.

Nessa turned her attention to the desk and array of computers on one side of the room. She picked up a sheet of paper, curiously reading its contents.

*Moon Shadow Agency* was written in bold typeface on the letterhead. It seemed to be reports on different demon activities around the globe. A list of people, equipment, houses, places; a whole network seemed to be operating under this name.

“What's Moon Shadow Agency?” She looked up at Slazzamar.

“That is Mark's area. He takes care of all agency business; you can't be a formidable demon hunter for thousands of years and not have followers,” Slazzamar said.

“This is quite a setup. Is it only humans on the payroll?” Nessa asked.

Slazzamar shook his head. “A few other non-human creatures as well.”

“Like you?”

“No, I guess I'm the newest addition. I'm not going to get a tattoo,

though.”

Darren had come over, handing him a drink.

Nessa smiled at the fondness in Slazzamar’s eyes. She looked back at the papers, setting them down.

“Tattoo?”

“Check out Mark’s right forearm next time you see him,” Slazzamar said, looking directly at her.

She gave a nod, turning back to the papers for a moment.

“Anything like the one you’ve got, Nessa?”

“You have one?” Slazzamar asked.

“According to Neman, I was marked with this when I was born, and it showed up when Neman and I got together that first time.” She felt her face heating.

“You’re so cute when you blush like that,” Darren teased.

Slazzamar gave her a curious look but said nothing.

Nessa sucked in a long, tired breath; the couch across the room was starting to look very inviting as she gave a yawn. Her body ached and she felt weary to the bone; she had no idea what the time was. Her stomach was starting to bloat more than she had expected it to—everything felt tight in her lower stomach. As she walked across the room, a sudden mild cramp made her pause. She took in a deep breath, letting it out slowly, guessing it was probably normal pregnancy symptoms. At least she hadn’t had any morning sickness.

“Is there anything else important I should know about you, lover?” Darren was asking Slazzamar. “I mean, it’s not every day I meet and fall



in love with someone as magical as you. What kind of powers do you have?"

"Hey, I've got magic powers; I can do the Vulcan hand salute," said Nessa, raising her hand to demonstrate. "Vanish a whole bar of chocolate and do the splits. Just don't ask me to do the splits for a while, until..." A stronger cramp hit, and she drew in a sharp breath, clutching at her stomach.

"Nessa, honey, are you all right?" Darren walked out from behind the bar, holding a drink.

The pain eased and she just smiled at Darren. "Yeah, peachy. Uugh..." A strong, sharp pain ripped through Nessa's stomach.

Darren had dropped the drink to dart forward, but Slazzamar was quicker than Darren, catching her before she fell. She panted, trying to cope with the pain as Slazzamar lifted her up and carried her to a sofa, laying her down. It eased for a few seconds before hitting harder again, bringing tears to Nessa's eyes. It was like her body was being torn apart from the inside out. Perspiration broke out all over her, and she started to shake.

"Talk to me, honey—what are your symptoms?" Darren switched into nurse mode.

"Pain, severe, stomach, baby," Nessa managed to gasp out. "Help me."

"We should call Neman," Slazzamar said, stepping back to let Darren run his hand over her stomach, one hand on her forehead.

"She's burning up. We need to get her to a hospital—she could be having a miscarriage." Darren pushed up her skirt to look between her thighs.

“At least you’re not bleeding, honey.”

“I promised to guard her.”

“Well, you can guard her at a hospital. Do that flashy thing you do and get her to a hospital right now.”

Nessa panted; the pain was so intense, she couldn’t seem to focus on anything.

“Neman’s not going to like this.”

“He’s going to like it even less if she dies.” Darren’s tone was deadly serious.

Slazzamar grumbled something she didn’t quite catch. Watching through half-closed eyes as Slazzamar picked her up in his arms, then put a hand on Darren’s shoulder, she could feel the power even through the pain racking her body. The confines of the Zigg disappeared.

## **Chapter Thirteen**

They materialized down a side alley around the corner from the only hospital Slazzamar knew—he'd once visited it while tracking a fey princess for her suspicious husband.

"I'm going to get spotted out here." Slazzamar didn't like being out in broad daylight, with his elf features and white hair.

"You need a hat and dark glasses," Darren said. "It's a modern world, Slazz baby, no one is going to care what you look like. They'll probably just think you're some eccentric punk."

Slazzamar glanced around at the people passing them in the streets. Spotting a man wearing dark glasses across the street, he teleported them off the man's face and onto his own. He did the same with a boy's baseball cap.

"I'll ask you how you did that later," Darren said, following closely as he carried Nessa around to the entrance of the hospital. She was barely conscious, letting out a low, pain-wracked moan, her skin glistening with sweat.

"Good lord, we're in London!" Darren exclaimed, looking about as they walked into the building. "I'm not sure I'll get used to that flashy thing you do."

"You said hospital; this is the only one I know." Slazzamar hung back while Darren raced up to a counter with a tall blonde woman sitting behind it. She pointed in a direction.

Darren returned, urging him to follow with Nessa. "This way, quickly."

Nessa clutched at Slazzamar's shirt; she had her eyes closed and her head against his chest, her face distorted in pain. He hurried after Darren, making twists and turns in the corridors. They came into a large open room with people walking about.

Darren grabbed a man with a white coat and a stethoscope hanging around his neck. "I've got a pregnant woman, with severe abdominal pains, there's no sign of bleeding, her temp has spiked in the last few minutes, and her body is convulsing, possible internal hemorrhaging."

Slazzamar knew Darren nursed humans, but seeing him talk to a doctor in his professional language was rather impressive. Everything about his human he adored.

"Are you a doctor?" the dark-skinned man asked Darren, but he was looking past him to where Slazzamar held Nessa.

"ER nurse at Mercy Hospital in Sydney, please help my friend." Darren waved at him, and Slazzamar brought Nessa forward.

The doctor glanced at her ashen face. "This way." He lead the way to a small cubical with a white bed; human medical instruments littered the wall behind. "How far along is she? Are you the father?"

Darren hesitated in his answer; Slazzamar assumed it was less than a week since the Chosen One had been impregnated with Neman's child, so the humans wouldn't understand the rapid onset of a Nephilim child. The doctor was picking up objects, placing them in his ear. He listened to her heart with his stethoscope.

"I'm not the father, we're friends," Darren said. "As for how far along..."

"She's about three months," Slazzamar answered, calculating the time and understanding a human woman was pregnant for nine months. Darren gave him a puzzled look. Slazzamar knew there would be questions later.

"We're going to need to get her down to Radiology for a scan right way." The doctor hurried off.

"I must contact Neman," Slazzamar said in a low voice to Darren. Nessa moaned in pain, doubling over on the small white bed.

"Go do what you must; I'll stay with Nessa."

Slazzamar hesitated, as he didn't want to lose sight of his charge or Darren. "I shall stay." He then found himself pushed out of the cubical as a host of men and women came charging in, snapping orders at each other. Darren seemed to be in his element among the group. They pushed sharp needles into Nessa's arms, and Slazzamar smelt the sharp smell of blood as it was drawn from her body. A mask was then placed over her mouth and nose, before they wheeled her out and down the corridor.

"The doc is going to do an ultrasound on Nessa's stomach to see what's going on inside," Darren explained as Slazzamar followed close

behind.

Slazzamar felt helpless to do anything but follow and stand guard over Nessa and Darren. He would rather bear Neman's anger than have him kill him outright if anything were to happen to her.

\* \* \* \* \*

The shield and sword were safely hidden within the lower bowels of his Ziggurat, so Neman flashed up to the library. Only the hum of the electricity that had turned his Ziggurat into a modern living space could be heard. Instantly he knew Vanessa was not in the safety of his home. Neman's blood boiled with rage; he was going to gut Slazzamar from throat to navel. Walking into the library, he saw a broken glass on the floor. Something had happened. Footsteps sounded, and Neman swiveled as Mark walked in carrying a large box.

"Hey boss, I have that Thomas guy, the man is nuts. He's in the courtyard going crazy over the artwork on the walls, we've got a tone of.... Uh, what's up?" Mark set down the box, noticing Neman's current state of rage.

"Where is Vanessa?" His voice held a deadly calm. Mark backed up three feet.

"I've no idea. I've only just arrived back, and there's a shitload of stuff to bring in."

"I am going to kill Slazzamar," he growled.

"I always told you, you can't trust a demon, even a half demon."

"Call our contacts. I want every eye open for her. How did she get

away from me twice! I swear I'm going to chain her up the dungeon," Neman thundered.

"We don't have one," Mark pointed out unhelpfully, pulling out his phone. "We'll find her."

\* \* \* \* \*

Darren sat by Nessa's bed holding her hand. The doctor had just left, after telling Darren some rather puzzling news about the Chosen One.

Slazzamar watched Darren tenderly care for her, sparking a hint of jealousy inside him. It was another feeling he was unfamiliar with. "She'll be all right now?"

Darren nodded.

"You love her," Slazzamar said quietly, as she appeared to be sleeping peacefully.

"Of course I love her, she's my best friend. We're like family, but I don't love her in the same way I love you, Slazz baby." Darren's hazel eyes regarded him. "Have you never had a friend you can rely on?"

Slazzamar shook his head. "This is all still very new to me, these feelings, being the good guy." Slazzamar stood up from the chair he had taken in the corner of the room. He moved around the bed; feeling the need to touch Darren, he ran his hand through his hair. Darren closed his eyes as if savoring his touch. "You're a beautiful boy, Darren. Maybe you deserve someone better than me."

Darren's eyes opened and he quickly pushed to his feet, grabbing onto Slazzamar's shoulders, staring into his eyes. "Don't you even dare

think it. You're stuck with me, elf, whether you like it or not." Darren pulled him down to gently brush his lips across his. "Looks like I have my work cut out for me with you."

Slazzamar pulled him in tightly to kiss him more deeply.

"Typical. When I said get a room, I didn't mean mine," a soft-voiced Nessa said.

Darren pulled away from Slazzamar, turning to smile down at her. "Hi honey, how are you feeling?" He leaned over her, smoothing the hair from her face.

"I need to tell Neman. I shall be as quick as possible. Do not leave or let anyone in the room, apart from those doctors."

"I won't," Darren promised, turning back to Nessa. "Honey, do I have some news for you."

"Everyone has kissed and made up, and there are no more evil fiends after me?" Slazzamar heard her say as he charged his power, focusing on where he wanted to materializes. There was a quick black flash before he reappeared in the library of Neman's Zigg. But before he could draw breath, he found himself pinned against a wall with a blade at his throat, Neman's livid face hovering over him.

"You have two seconds to tell me where she is, demon spawn!" he growled viciously.

"Central London Hospital—she became ill."

Neman pulled his blade back from Slazzamar's throat.

"I couldn't come until now. I stayed to guard her."

"Haven't you ever heard of cell phones, Slazzamar?" Mark said from behind him.



## Dangerous Moonlight by Angela Castle

---

“Take me to her.”

Slazzamar gripped Neman’s arms, taking him back to the hospital room.

\* \* \* \* \*

Vanessa’s pale blue eyes stood out as she smiled weakly. Her face was almost as pale as the thin white sheet that covered the lower half of her body. A thin opaque tube had been inserted into the veins at the back of her hands. Even when ill she was beautiful to him.

Slazzamar quickly explained Nessa’s sudden stomach pains, and Darren insisting on bringing her to a hospital.

Guilt consumed Neman for not being there to take care of her. He was grateful that Darren and Slazzamar had been there.

Darren moved away from Nessa’s side to let him in. “Hey, there’s the big guy.”

Neman leaned over, kissing her forehead and gently brushing her hair back. “Getting into trouble again, sweetness?” he teased gently, trying not to let his worry show in front of her.

“You know me—can’t keep away from it.” Even her voice was weak.

“Are you all right? What did the doctors find?” Neman glanced up at Darren, concern for Vanessa overwhelming him.

“It seems your little rug rats are growing more rapidly than expected. Nessa’s body is struggling to keep up,” Darren explained.

“Rats?” Did he hear a plural in that sentence?

“Does this prophecy say anything about twins, Neman?” Nessa asked.

“Twins?” Surprised by this sudden news, he blurted out, “Are you certain?”

“I was there during the ultrasound—definitely two heartbeats, and two of everything else. Got twins in your family Neman?” Darren asked.

“I am the older twin of my brother,” he confessed.

“Looks like you’re keeping the tradition going then.”

Two children; maybe only one would be the prince. He focused back on Vanessa. “Was this the cause of her pain? Is she in any danger? What of the children?”

Darren shook his head. “The doctors are scratching their heads, but from what they can determine the children are growing at an extreme rate, and Nessa’s body is struggling to keep up. They are taking everything she has from her, draining her strength and energy. They gave her a shot of adrenaline, which has calmed the process by speeding up her metabolism, to allow her body to keep up. The fetuses are healthy and strong. She needs to take it easy, and I mean easy, not to lift even a finger,” Darren said with all seriousness. “You’re going to need high-energy foods to keep up with the demands of your babies, honey.” Darren looked at her.

Neman took his words to heart; once again he had failed to properly care for her.

“Oh rubbish, I’m going to be just fine.” She struggled to sit up, and Neman pushed her gently back.

“Uh-huh, honey. Those babies are taking all you got—you need to

focus on regaining your strength,” said Darren.

“I will see to it,” Neman vowed.

Slazzamar stood up straight, his ears twitching. “Do you feel that?”

Neman was too absorbed with his concern over Vanessa to notice his surroundings. But then he felt the energy in the air, which meant only one thing.

“You have been here too long—they have found us,” Neman said. “We have to get her out of here now. Can we move her?” he asked Darren.

“She’s weak but stable.”

“Sorry, sweetness, but it will have to do.”

“They’ll trace us if we teleport back to the Zigg,” Slazzamar pointed out.

“I have a place here outside London. We’ll have to go there, then get far enough away to teleport in safety.”

Darren was already unhooking Nessa from the machines.

Neman ripped off the bed sheet, gathering her up in his arms, holding her close against his chest. Nessa glanced down at the sheet.

“Another bed sheet; should I even bother with clothes anymore?” Nessa said, her ever-present humor showing through her unease.

“Sweetness, if we get out of this alive, I’m going to drape you in the finest silks on Earth.”

“I’d be happy with a pair of jeans and T-shirt at this moment.” She anchored her arm around his neck.

“Follow through my port,” he told Slazzamar, who was taking hold of Darren. A moment later they materialized in his mansion estate west of London, at the base of the staircase.

“Goh blimey, you sacred me, Neman!” Jonas, the middle-aged man who operated his London division, exclaimed. He had a black metallic gun in the palm of his hand.

“Jonas, get everyone out now—we have incoming,” Neman snapped before Jonas could start a round of questions, though he did look curiously at Nessa in his arms. Slazzamar appeared with Darren a moment later. Jonas’s eyes widened and he turned, running up the stairs and disappeared down the hall, yelling, “Code Red! Code Red!”

“This way.” Neman carried Nessa through the hall and under the stairs heading to the back of the house, where he kept a collection of cars.

“We have about three minutes, I’d say,” Slazzamar said.

“Three minutes for what?” Darren asked.

Neman studied the selection of keys that hung from a board on the wall as he came into the large garage. “Before those demons can track us to this location.”

“They can do that?”

“It takes a good ten to fifteen minutes for the residual energy to fade after a teleport,” Slazzamar explained to Darren.

“Oh, well, then let’s get the hell out of here.”

“Wow, nice collection,” Nessa said, peering at the row of sports cars. Neman selected the keys to the BMW 760 that hung besides the Jaguar XR, his Alfa Romeo 8C, and several high-performance motorbikes.

“I hope you don’t have any vegetables stashed under that sheet,

sweetness."

Nessa's forehead creased in a frown before her eyes went wide, as she registered what he was referring to. "You saw that?"

"I was watching," he confessed, giving her a small smile as he unlocked the BMW.

As he hit a second button to make the garage door roll upwards, a sudden bang shook the house. Gunfire and yells could be heard. Games were over; quickly and as gingerly as possible, he placed Nessa in the front seat, buckling her in securely. The other two jumped in the backseat, and Neman hurried to the driver's side. The car roared to life. Shoving it into gear, he slammed his foot down on the accelerator as two Shadow warriors burst through into the garage. A bolt flew in their direction as the car's tires squealed and, accelerating forward, his Jaguar exploded, narrowly missing them.

"Holy crap!" The fright in Darren's voice was evident.

"Damn, there goes one cat I liked," Neman muttered as a second bolt hit the car, the back window shattering glass all over Darren and Slazzamar. Wind whipped in, the car taking a sharp corner. Coming around the front of the estate, Neman could see his men scrambling about. Swords flashed and sulfur guns flared, guns that burnt up the target on impact. His London team was cutting down the attacking demons. Lights flashed from behind them. Neman hissed angrily, seeing they'd taken his bikes.

"Damn, I like those bikes as well. Slazzamar, take the wheel!"

"I've never driven a car!"

"I'll do it!" Darren was climbing over the seats while Neman flashed into the backseat, drawing out several of his blades. The buzz of speeding bikes revved faster behind them in the darkness.

"Head out to the right," he yelled at Darren. Slazzamar was clinging onto the handrail. "You take this." Yelling above the rushing wind, he gave Slazzamar his semiautomatic pistol. "Aim and pull the trigger."

Slazzamar twisted in the seat, taking aim at the bikes; a bolt flew past and the whole car skidded to the right as Darren turned past the estate gates onto the main roadway. Slazzamar was knocked sideways. The gatepost exploded, sending concrete shrapnel into the car, as they flew past. The bikes kept right behind them, and more deadly magic bolts flew at them. Neman took aim and threw the first of his blades, hitting a Shadow demon right between its glowing red eyes. The bike wobbled, sliding sideways, before slamming at full force into a tree. The second demon accelerated, coming up beside the car. Slazzamar fired several rounds at the creature. As one hit the bike, the demon leapt like a predatory cat from the bike onto the back of the car, landing with a resounding thump. Its red eyes glowed behind a human façade.

Neman lunged forward, knocking the creature backwards before it could charge a bolt. It fell with a heavy thud onto its back, denting the boot. Without hesitating, Neman leapt on it, plunging a second blade right into its heart, giving it a twist to ensure he killed the Shadow demon. The creature thrashed about. Neman yanked out his blade, shoving the demon off the car and watching it hit the ground, rolling briefly before fading in the darkness.

"Hey Nessa, just like V8 races down in Melbourne!" Darren yelled, the obvious adrenaline rush hitting him.

"Just keep your hands on the wheel, flyboy!" she said in a low voice.

"That was too darn close." Neman scanned the darkness behind them to make sure no more creatures followed, before sliding down into the glass-shattered car. "Everyone all right?"

“Just a normal night, eh?” he heard Vanessa say quietly.

“I will drive now; Slazzamar, change us.” He gave a nod and leant forward, placing his hand on Darren’s shoulder. In the next instant Darren was in his place, and Neman’s eyes scanned the road ahead. He glanced at Nessa, at her tired eyes and face still pale in the darkness. Neman reached out, gently touching her face; he could feel her trembling body. He could see her white knuckles as she gripped onto the seat for dear life.

“It’s going to be all right,” he promised her. Nessa gave a nod but said nothing; she turned her head, staring out into the darkness. Neman would give anything to know what was going through her head at that moment. She had borne everything with such grace, but was it starting to wear her down? Did she hate him for putting her through all this? Not that they had any choice.

## **Chapter Fourteen**

Demons cowered as a burst of strong demonic power exploded through the cavern. Only Belshazzar stood firm and unflinching, as he had delivered the news to her.

“Death will be too good for Slazzamar when I get my hands on him. A few thousand years in my hell pit, then I may decide whether or not to kill him,” she raged.

Belshazzar inclined his shadowy head towards her. “I had the mortals of the place of healing interrogated. The Chosen One carries not one child but two.”

Confusion creased her features. “How can this be? The prophecy dictates only one prince.”

“My Queen.” Gremlock stepped forward, holding a scroll. “There



is nothing to say either way, only that whatever child or children come from their union, our Realm will be sealed shut, imprisoning us in for eternity."

"The fact is the Chosen One is still alive after too many attempts. My warriors have come closer to killing her than any of yours."

"Were not your warriors killed by the mortals?" she sneered at Belshazzar.

"The mortals were well prepared to defend against our kind; it shall not happen again."

Jezebel gave a snort of disbelief.

Fernos the Gorlan Kat demon came rushing into Jezebel's throne room. "My Queen." He skidded to a halt, bowing in front of her. "I have found where the Chosen One is hidden, and the vile betrayer Slazzamar."

"Then tell it, Fernos!" Jezebel impatiently snapped.

"I returned to that human hospital and watched and waited. I saw Slazzamar and his human. When they teleported I was able to track but not follow. A powerful magic ended my progress. Neman has a hiding place beneath the Moon Temple at Ur, my Queen."

Jezebel walked down the steps. "Well, it seems some people just never leave home. It was said that Nanna's temple was destroyed after a large earthquake, but now I suspect differently, that it was just moved and a new one built in its place," Jezebel said thoughtfully.

"I shall gather my army," Belshazzar said as he turned to leave.

"There may be heavy god magic on his temple, Belshazzar. We are going to need more than just warriors this time. We need a sorcerer—one loyal to our Realm."

“Azeral was defeated a thousand years ago and entombed.” Belshazzar said. Azeral the great demon sorcerer had been defeated by his own kind for breaking every kind of Outer Realm law imaginable, in a lust for power that exceeded even her own. Even Jezebel was glad to see him stopped.

“He was nothing but trouble. Xenith of the sorcerer class owes me a debt; it is time I cashed out.”

“I believe the expression is ‘cashed in.’”

Belshazzar’s disgusted snort enraged Jezebel. She clenched her fists, only keeping her rage in check as she needed Belshazzar and his army. When this was over, she would have a talk with Lord Derkin to help put Belshazzar down once and for all. She gave him a tight, false smile. “Let us get this done.”

\* \* \* \* \*

Nessa tried to roll over but found a heavy arm wrapped around her middle and a hard, warm body pressed against hers. Opening her eyes, she saw Neman was asleep beside her. His usually hardened features were softened by his relaxed state; seemed even gods need their rest. Two days had passed since their narrow escape from London, and Neman had been more than doting, waiting on her hand and foot; every time she tried to move he was there to scold, growl or escort her into the bathroom despite her ranting and protests. He made sure she ate everything she was brought—foods rich in protein, calcium and sugar. She drew the line at him feeding her.

Darren and Slazzamar had returned to the hospital to obtain more medication to help her cope with her twins, as well as a range of

pregnancy vitamins Darren insisted she take. A black lady with a cheery smile named Mona had come in bringing all the clothes she and Ana had bought in L.A., along with her favorite strawberry lotions, the brand of shampoos and soaps she used and brushes for her hair, colorful quilts and pillow coverings. They had even brought in extra drawers and closets to hold all her new belongings. The once drab room was definitely now brightened with a feminine touch. It seemed she had truly moved in with Neman. Nessa was refreshed and energized from the care; although she felt somewhat smothered, she was grateful. Having Neman so close to her was comforting, but she longed for more than just his caring touch—she missed his heated caress and passionate kisses.

Nessa smiled to herself; shifting his arm slightly, she slithered down to press her lips against his chest. A slight dusting of hair tickled her nose as she sneaked her tongue out to swirl it around a masculine nipple, before grazing it with her teeth. She felt a low rumble from his chest. Wickedly she skimmed her fingers along his side, across the hardened planes of his stomach, letting her tongue trail a hot wet path down between the valleys of his muscles. Kissing and tasting his divine skin. He tasted so good, he was definitely her new addiction. He was naked as he slept beside her, and his erection hadn't gone unnoticed.

Finding his beautiful, hard length, she was barely able to wrap her fingers around it. Velvety soft yet so solidly firm, she caressed his tip, feeling the slickness of his pre-cum. Neman's lips parted and, giving a low moan, he shifted onto his back, his eyes still closed. Nessa raised herself up to slide farther down the bed until her lips lined up with his cock. She licked her lips before parting them, darting out her tongue to slide it over his head and swirl it around. Tasting his salty sweet flavor, she decided it was better than chocolate. She eagerly started licking up and down his length, enjoying every part of his cock. Her fingers found the large, tight sacks at the base and gave them a squeeze. Opening her mouth, she took in all that she could, sucking gently at first. Neman gave a low, deep, guttural moan.

“Sweetness, what are you doing?” His husky question came though his heavy breathing. She pulled her mouth off his cock.

“Enjoying myself; do you want me to stop?” she asked and gave a long lick of the underside of his cock. He shuddered.

“In your condition, you shouldn’t.” But he made no move to stop her. She gave a chuckle before taking him back into her mouth, her fist holding and pumping what she couldn’t fit into her mouth.

“Vanessa, sweetness.” He moaned, his fingers threading into her hair, cradling her head. Nessa took a deep breath, slipped her hand down, then swallowed his cock down the back of her throat. Neman growled, his fingers digging into her scalp as she swallowed several times before pulling back in order to breathe.

“Oh baby, sweet mother of all,” he growled, letting go of her hair.

“Don’t move—you’re big enough to choke me.” She glanced up to see him looking down at her with that heated, passionate gaze she loved to see in his eyes. Smiling, she went back to feasting on his cock, sucking long, hard and deep and extracting more moans. His fists gripped at the sheets when she took him deep again. She felt him thicken before he burst forth; then she heard the sheets tear, along with a muffled yell. As his hot sweet cum hit the back of her throat, Nessa swallowed hard and fast until there was no more to take in. Slowly she pulled back, licking around him to make sure she had taken every last drop of his godly nectar, before releasing his still-hard member from her mouth. With a self-satisfied grin, she looked up at him. “Now *that* is better than chocolate.”

Neman gripped her shoulders, pulling her up. He captured her mouth with his own, hard and demanding.

Nessa gave herself over to his embrace. She didn’t know how she was ever going to go without his touch or kiss when this was all over. “Make love to me,” she whispered when he let her breathe again.

“Sweetness, in your state, you shouldn’t, I shouldn’t—I do not wish to tire you out again.”

“I’m feeling really good. I need you, please, Neman.” She nibbled along the line of his chin.

He gripped her tightly, pulling her up on top of him. “I cannot deny you, my sweetness; take it easy now.”

Nessa straddled his hips; she shimmied off her silk nightgown, tossing it aside. His hands skimmed upwards, starting from her outer thighs, moving on to her hips, over her ribs, his fingers caging in her breasts, squeezing her ample flesh in his hands, thumbs flicked over each tightened nipple. Nessa leaned down to hover them above his face, and Neman greedily accepted her offering. When he sucked the right one into his mouth, his tongue swirling over the bud, Nessa closed her eyes at the sensation shooting through her. She slid her hips farther down, and his rock-solid cock made its presence known by pressing into her stomach. Neman, unlike human men, had an amazingly quick recovery from climaxes. Raising her hips, she reached down to find his cock and guide it into her aching wet channel. They moaned in unison as she sank down onto him; the feeling of her inner walls stretching around him was sheer bliss. Neman released her breasts to grip at her hips, helping her slide up and down on his cock.

He always felt so darn good. Everything about Neman was better than good. As much as she wanted this to last, she was eager for her own pleasure; almost three days without having Neman inside her had turned her back into a horny twit, desperate to have him. She threw back her head, moving her hips up and down faster.

He gave a chuckle. “Eager minx.” His hands slipped down between them, his thumb finding her clit, rubbing in firm, gentle circles that made her gasp and moan. He thrust his hips up, taking control. Through her whimpers and moans, she knew he wouldn’t last long before his need to

take control took over—not that Nessa minded. She'd take him any way she could have him. Her whole body was like a finely wound string that came bursting apart under his talented skill.

“That's it, my love—come for me.”

Nessa wasn't sure she'd heard him correctly as her mind and body soared. He kept pummeling up into her body over and over, keeping her pushed over that edge until he groaned loudly and thrust his hips up, lodging himself in deeply as he came. Nessa collapsed forward, panting.

“Sweetness, are you all right? We didn't overdo it again?” The look of concern consumed Neman's handsome face. He rolled her over, withdrawing from her depths.

Nessa sighed and looked up at him with a smile. Her love for Neman was almost overwhelming; the words to tell him of her love hung just on her lips, but she was unable to utter them and instead just smiled. She knew he only cared for her because of his children, and it tore at her inside. She covered the pain by leaning forward and kissing his lips. “Just wonderful,” she said, which was only a half lie. Physically, she felt good; mentally, she felt the weight of her uncertainty. Resting her head against his chest, snuggling into his warmth, and closing her eyes, she decided she'd try to hold on to this—and on to him—for as long as she could.

## **Chapter Fifteen**

Neman paced. Every instinct told him something was not right; it had been way too quiet for too long.

"You're going to wear a hole in the floor," Nessa said from her seat in the corner of the library. She had a box of chocolates on her lap and nibbled at one. Neman had allowed her out of their room on the condition she not do anything. Slazzamar was puzzling over a mobile phone as Darren tried to teach him to use it.

"I don't like any of this. It's been too quiet. Do you think you can go to the Outer Realm and gather some information, Slazzamar?"

"And be boiled alive if I'm caught by any of Jezebel's or Belshazzar's spies? I'd rather not."

"Don't you have any contacts outside in the Human Realm?"

Neman turned on him. He seemed to think for a moment.

“I do, but it would be awkward.” He looked across at Darren.

“I know that look, Slazz,” Darren said without even raising his head. “Do what you have to do if it means helping Nessa. I don’t mind.”

Mark swiveled in his chair, looking up from his computer screens. “All reports are saying the activity has died down topside; the London team came out pretty unscathed.”

Neman was relieved that no one had gotten seriously hurt in the skirmish.

“I hate to be a pessimist, but isn’t there always a calm before the storm?” Nessa said.

Vanessa was right, and that was what worried Neman. Something was coming. He watched her set the box of chocolates aside and push off the blanket to stand. Her color was high in her cheeks, her skin held a beautiful glow, and her scent had changed slightly. Her pregnancy was making her all the more alluring, driving him crazy with lust he was having difficulty controlling. She was beautifully giving whenever he couldn’t seem to hold back, which seemed to be all the time around her. “Where are you going?” Neman demanded as she moved toward the exit of the library. There was something else going on behind her eyes. Neman sensed she was hiding something.

“Relax, big guy. Just to the bathroom, then I’ll stop in at the kitchen to see Mona for a womanly chat. Too much testosterone in here—no offence, Darren.”

“None taken, honey.”

“Hey, I think I got it,” Slazzamar said, and the phone beeped at him. “Not so hard.”



“Great, baby. Next I’ll teach you to drive.”

Nessa vanished through the door, and Neman stared after her. “We can’t just sit here and wait for the inevitable; we have to make a preemptive strike. It’s time to put the Realm leaders in their places if we’re ever going to have any semblance of peace.”

Slazzamar shifted on the sofa to look up at him. “What are you suggesting?”

“It’s time to take this war to them rather than waiting for it to come to us. Let’s review whom we’re facing.”

“Lord Derkin has had a hold on a good quarter of the demon quadrant. Belshazzar has been warring with Derkin for the past few thousand years. Then there’s Beelzebub, Jezebel and any other Outer Realm creatures they’ve employed.”

“What’s that, four armies against one? Not that you could call us an army,” Mark pointed out.

“We’re soooo doomed,” groaned Darren.

“Pity you don’t have your full powers anymore—they could have come in mighty helpful about now,” said Slazzamar.

“We need to draw the fight to a more neutral ground, where spell casting and magic use is inhibited, and a sword can swing freely. There’s only one place I know of.” Neman and Slazzamar looked at each other; they both seemed to be on the same page.

“The Sulfur Canyons.”

\* \* \* \* \*

A scream made everyone jump to their feet. Neman flashed from the library to the open courtyard, where Nessa stood facing a hulking horned beast who grinned down at her.

"My, what a bonnie buxom lass ye be, wench. Dinna a wonder even a fertility god canna resist ye," he told her in a thick Highland accent. "Tell me when he be done riding ya—I'd like a fair go too."

Neman clutched his sword and slammed himself right between Lord Derkin and Vanessa, pushing her back. The Outer Realm warlord never even flinched.

"What in the blue blazes is that?" gasped Nessa. Darren, Slazzamar and Mark raced into the courtyard, ready to help defend her.

"Lord Derkin at your service, lassie." He gave an overly dramatic bow to Nessa.

Neman noted that he took his eyes off him and his sword, indicating he was no threat to them.

"What do you want, Derkin? I've no time for your games."

"I've heard ya having a wee bit o' trouble with Belshazzar, laddie. My enemy's enemy is my friend."

"How did you get in here?" Neman demanded, never lowering his guard.

Nessa moved to stand by his side. There was more curiosity in her eyes than fear.

"Your security is lacking, laddie. Anywho, ya shanna be looking to wave your toothpick at your new allies, lad."

“Allies? You’re a demon and a warlord; who’s to say you’re not here to stop the prophecy?”

A grin split his large goateed face. “Been listening to too many rumors, laddie; if you’ve a been fighting as long as I have, the sound of a wee bit of peace be mighty tempting. I’m long overdue a holiday and a lusty wench to bed.” His gaze flashed to Vanessa, his eyes winking at her.

“You have just as much to lose if the rift between Realms is sealed, Derkin. Why would you want something that will seal you in?”

“Aaah, therra ye be wrong, lad. If ya remember, I be a creator, half god meself. ’Tis no skin off my nose if the Realms are sealed off or not—’tis Belshazzar I wanta see put in his place. So, lassie, do you have a buxom sister, perhaps? I do like my women well rounded,” he persisted with a grin.

Vanessa laughed, setting Neman on edge. “I’m beginning to suspect that everyone from these Outer and Lower Realms are nothing but walking horn dogs,” she said.

Derkin gave a chuckle. “Ye be right about that, lassie.” His face turned serious. “But it be time for peace, and not only I agree—my army will fight for ya, lass, and ya wee barn. I bring friends to fight as well.”

As if on cue, a tall, pale man with luminescent eyes, dressed in a tuxedo and sipping what looked like a martini glass full of blood, appeared, followed by a very large blond werewolf. Vanessa gasped.

“Oh brilliant—who let in the stray?” said the vampire in a very broad British accent with a roll of his luminescent deep green eyes. The werewolf snarled at the vampire before shifting into a very naked, large-muscled, perfectly tanned man with honey-gold hair and deep blue eyes.

“Shut it, you overgrown leech.” The air sizzled with the hostility

between the two.

"At least I'm not a walking flea bag."

"My bite is bigger than your bark, fang boy," snapped the werewolf.

"Oh, please, I'm at a loss for better insults than that, Scooby."

"Hang on, hold the haggle, I'll get some popcorn," Nessa said with a smirk, obviously enjoying the banter between the vampire and werewolf. Nessa tugged on Neman's arm. "What's with the James Bond vampire and overly hairy Rin Tin Tin?" Nessa glanced between the werewolf and the vampire.

The vampire swept forward, taking Nessa's hand in his and bowing over it. "Count Vladimir Draco at your service, my lady."

Neman's blood was beginning to boil as Nessa giggled at him.

The werewolf sniffed the air. "What an alluring scent." His eyes turned toward Nessa.

Neman guessed he wasn't the only one to scent her overly charged hormonal state of pregnancy. Striding forward, unabashed by his naked state, the werewolf shoved the vampire aside.

"Lucas Valknar, Lycan King. I must say you have a most charming scent."

"Keep your dog on a leash, Derkin," Neman said in a low warning tone, pulling Nessa back and away from the trio. "And put some damn clothes on, Valknar."

"Hey, I don't mind," Nessa piped up. She seemed to be enjoying herself way too much, to Neman's frustration. Valknar smiled at Vanessa. "Ever considered being a pin-up boy? You'd make a fortune with that..."

"Vanessa," snapped Neman in a jealous rage. She just raised an eyebrow at him. Derkin chuckled. A set of dark casual clothes appeared on the werewolf.

"Spoilsport." She nudged him in the back.

"I'm liking your lassie even more, Neman—she has real spirit."

"So why are they here?" asked Nessa.

"It seems we've just gained an army, sweetness. You need to understand—if we don't do something, they are going to kill you and the babies. If we've any chance of ever having peace and making this prophecy come to pass, we have to stop those who want you dead."

"Okay, so hiding out in the Bahamas isn't an option?"

Derkin let out a laugh. "Sure you dunna wish to swap your god for a demon, lassie? we're hell on wheels in the sack."

Nessa shook her head. "One god's enough for me, thanks."

Neman was somewhat relieved by her words.

"Stud-r-us on order in the Outer Realm, huh?" he heard Darren quip to Slazzamar, who strode forward.

"Even with his army, Neman, we are still greatly outnumbered—the odds are stacked in their favor," Slazzamar pointed out. "If we draw their armies out, it is sheer suicide."

"We cannot hide in here forever," growled Neman.

"Showing the side of yellow now, Slazzamar? It's good odds ta me, laddie—just more of Belshazzar's blood ta squeeze through my fingers."

"No, this just may work; I have possession of a weapon that will aide us," said Neman. "Mark, show our guests to the library." Taking

hold of Nessa's arm, he pulled her in the other direction as Mark came forward.

"Gentlemen, if you will follow me, please." The three of them followed Mark into the hall, the vampire and the werewolf arguing, Darren and Slazzamar taking up the rear.

"I think you should get some rest, love," he told her.

Her blue eyes sparkled with mischief and mirth. "And miss all the fun? I don't think so. They are here for me, so why disappoint?" She cocked her head, regarding him. "I do believe the great god Neman is jealous?"

Neman didn't want to acknowledge or deny that fact, and he didn't want any men near his woman, naked or not. Neman couldn't help the surge of possessive jealousy he felt over Vanessa.

"They are my babies you're carrying, no one else's. You belong to me, Vanessa—I won't let anyone take you from me."

A look of hurt flashed across her face. "I wonder if you'd be saying that if there were no babies, Neman."

He looked directly into her eyes, pulling her into his arms. "Yes, sweetness, I would. Fates and prophecy be damned, I've waited a long time for you, Vanessa, and I won't lose you."

The smile returned to her eyes. "You could never lose me, Neman. You're the only hunk-a-licious god I want and need, but you gotta give a girl a break for wanting to have a little fun." She smoothed her hands up over his chest, winding them up and around his neck. Her smile was soft and seductive, desire obvious in her eyes. She licked her lips to tempt him. "Darling, when you have the best, everything else is less than second rate."

He knew she was pampering to his ego, but it worked. He lowered his head, gently running his tongue around her lips. Letting out a soft sigh, she parted them invitingly. He swept his tongue in, keeping a firm pressure on her mouth. As their tongues danced, desire shot through Neman's body. He found himself crushing her against him, heatedly possessing and dominating every part of the kiss, like he needed to imprint himself upon her, to show her she belonged to him. He groaned, tearing himself away. "Sweetness, what you do to me." He could feel her trembling in his arms, understanding her need, but now was not the time. When this was all over, he'd spend several years just making love to her.

"Uh hum." A loud clearing of a throat alerted them to someone else's presence. Neman broke away from Vanessa's sweet warmth.

Thomas Armod stood at a respectable distance, a large clipboard and digital camera in his hands. "Forgive the interruption. I have been in the upper temple. It truly is a wonder to be here, but as I was making observational notes, a strange occurrence happened, and I wonder if you could shed some light on it for me."

"What is it, Thomas?" Neman asked the priest and archeologist who had been snooping around everywhere, overly excited to be in an actual functioning Ziggurat.

"There are four large symbols on the four comers of the temple walls that do not match with your ancient language, but then they began to glow red."

"Stay here." Neman teleported into the temple. It was lit up with torches that Thomas had found. Neman had not stepped foot in this part of the Ziggurat since Sin had sunk it four thousand years ago. The effigies and statues of him still remained standing. He looked up. True to Thomas's words, the protection symbols that had been set in place by Sin were glowing. It meant only one thing; something was attempting to penetrate its defenses. It took powerful magic for that to happen. Neman

flashed back to the courtyard, grabbed Vanessa's hand and almost dragged her behind him as he made his way to the library. Thomas followed behind.

The library was looking overly crowded; Derkin and Slazzamar were in conversation, while the vampire and werewolf glared at each other from across opposite sides of the room, and Mark leaned nervously against his desk.

"Good gracious, what is that?" Thomas began, his eyes wide and staring at Lord Derkin.

"It's better not to ask," Nessa told Thomas, then looked back to Neman. "Neman, what's going on?" Her voice was low and full of concern.

"You want a new war, Derkin, you're about to get one. We have about twenty minutes before the protection seal that keeps this place hidden is broken."

"How did they find us?" Mark looked puzzled.

"Lad, if I could find ya, then no doubt others will," Derkin said.

"What about the Sulfur Canyon idea?" Slazzamar said.

"You can't use magic there," Valknar said with a frown.

"That's the whole idea—it will come down to strength and skill, not magic and powers," said Slazzamar.

"I like ya thinking, lad," Derkin said. "How do ya draw them out if therra coming here?"

"They'll figure it out when they find the place empty," said Neman. "We're going to the Outer Realm. Call in your armies, everyone—it seems we're going into battle sooner rather than later."



"Oh goodie, I get to see this place at last," Vanessa said, her tone less than excited.

"Darren, get Mona and make sure Vanessa has everything she needs for a trip to care for her and the babies."

"Did ya say babies, as in more than one?" Derkin asked.

Nessa held up her hand with two fingers out in a V. "Twins."

"I thought therra be only one prince?" Derkin looked puzzled.

Nessa shrugged. "I haven't read this prophecy, so I don't have a clue either."

"We haven't time for this—we have to go now," said Neman.

Darren walked forward. "C'mon, honey—better do what your big guy says."

"Just whose side are you on anyway?" Nessa said as they walked out the door.

Derkin turned on Neman. "You gonna take her and ya wee barns to the Outer Realm, laddie?"

"Only for as long as it takes to draw them out; you'd best make sure your army is ready," Neman instructed Derkin. Derkin gave a nod and vanished.

"Thomas, prepare your men, as I have a particular job for you. Mark, I would prefer you to head topside and out of harm's way."

Mark just stared at him. "I bloody well will not; if there's going to be a fight, I want in all the way."

Neman gave his friend a pat on the shoulder, along with a nod.

Mark walked out of the library to go armor up.

"Slazzamar, show the others the weapons room."

"What about you?" Slazzamar asked.

"I've got it covered." With that, he teleported out.

## **Chapter Sixteen**

Nessa licked her lips; every part of her body flared with lust. She drew in a sharp breath. It was hardly appropriate at a time like this, but damn, Neman was frigging hot! Worn black leather encase his upper muscled torso, and on top of that was a layer of unpolished plated armor linking the long sections together, meeting in the middle. Each section had intricately carved symbols. Dead center, connecting the lower part of the armor, were strips of metal buckles and straps. Protecting his lower stomach was an unmistakable moon symbol, more gothic-looking buckles, and straps that reached down to his hips, winding down over his black leather pants to his upper thighs. Heavy thick boots covered his feet. His bulging shoulder muscles were bare; the lower part of his arms to his wrists had been bound in more strips of tough-looking black leather. A blood-red cape hung down his back. Deadly sharp three- to four-inch blades were strapped to places along his waist within easy reach of his hands. He looked every bit the ancient warrior ready to do battle, and to

## Dangerous Moonlight by Angela Castle

---

Nessa, he also looked so dangerously sexy.

"You know what they say about a man in leather." Darren nudged Nessa back into reality from her daydream of jumping Neman and screwing his brains out, everyone else be damned.

"Uuuhh—I—uh—"

"I'll get a chin wipe for your drool, honey," Darren sniggered, understanding her dilemma. "You should see how my elf is dressed. Mmmmm, I'm going to insist he wear it next time we find some time to ourselves."

Nessa knew exactly where he was coming from, as she was having the exact same thoughts about Neman.

Neman moved to pick up a beautifully shiny shield full of decorative symbols and a long, dangerous-looking scimitar with a sharp, jagged edge. He hooked the blade to his waist, balancing the shield with one strong arm.

"Is that what I think it is?" gasped Thomas, coming up behind them. "I thought it was just a myth."

"What's he talking about?" Darren asked.

"The weapons and armor of Anu."

"Don't touch them," Neman said in low warning tone. "Only someone who was born of a god can touch them without perishing."

Thomas stepped back.

"Mona's out safely," said Mark. He had a collection of guns strapped to his own torso, with a few blades.

"My men are ready; we don't have the ability to teleport as you do,

though,” Thomas said with his eyes still on Neman’s weapon and shield.

“They don’t need to; humans in the Outer Realm would be easy fodder against supernatural creatures. Your main duty is to protect Vanessa.”

Thomas nodded. “I shall not fail.”

“Hang on, I’m not coming with you?” Nessa shot him a look, as she didn’t want to be left behind.

“Yes, you will for a short time, but not during battle.” She understood from his firm tone he was not going to be swayed.

It didn’t stop her from pouting at him.

“Think of your babies—the prophecy must be fulfilled,” said Thomas. She knew they were right; what could she possibly do in the midst of battle? But still, she didn’t like it. “I just don’t like the idea of you going out fighting while I’m stuck behind, twiddling my thumbs,” she said with annoyance.

“Sweetness, I know you want to fight too, but your mission is more important,” said Neman. He walked over to gently run his hand over her lower stomach. “Protecting our little treasures is what you must do.”

“You’ve a mighty fine weapons collection, Neman,” Vladimir Draco said. He no longer wore the tux but more medieval-looking armor. He swung a blade around a few times as if warming up. Lucas Valknar hadn’t changed into anything; he just stood there with his arms folded, watching the vampire.

“I can kill more with my jaws than you can with your toothpick, you pale-faced tick.”

“Oh shut up, Fido.”

"I'll wager I can kill more demons than you, coffin lurker."

Nessa watched the two with great amusement; the vampire pretended to look very bored at the idea. "I'll keep score, whelp."

"Children, keep it for the battle," Derkin said, giving Neman a nod.

Slazzamar was the last to stride in, adjusting the straps on his own leather and metal armor. Darren grinned like an idiot as he approached.

"The barren plains just beyond the Sulfur Canyon," Neman said, wrapping his free arm around her. His golden eyes looked down into hers, while a small, knowing smile twitched at the corner of his lips. "Keep those thoughts for later, love," he whispered near her ear.

"How do you know what I'm thinking?"

"I can smell your desire, sweetness."

Nessa blushed as she felt the energy in the air just before they "popped" out.

Wind whipped around them, billowing out Neman's red cloak. The powerful smell of the Sulfur Canyon wafted across the barren plains to reach their location. Once they stepped through into the canyon, neither magic nor any type of powers could be used, not even the power to teleport. The Sulfur Canyon is also known as the Dead Zone of the Outer Realm.

Nessa stepped away from Neman to look around with wonder in her eyes. Then she held her nose. "Pee-uwww. I was expecting this place to be, well, less smelly."

"That would be the sulfur you smell, sweetness, just beyond the plains here. This is only a small part of the Outer Realm.

"Whatever you do, Derkin," Neman continued as he appeared

along with several hundred Lower Realm demons, “you leave Jezebel for me; if I can retrieve my powers from the bitch, I can end all of this in an instant.”

Nessa frowned at him. “Is that the same one who’s after Slazzamar?”

“Demon queen, powerful and known for her well...” Derkin faltered when Neman shot him a deadly look. “Don’t worry, I get it.” Derkin tapped his nose with a smile.

Slazzamar appeared with Mark. “Where’s Darren?”

“Safe with Thomas and his men. He kicked up a stink, but I’ll not risk his life when the only dangerous weapon he possesses is a sharp tongue.”

Nessa gave him a nod of approval. “Guess that makes me the proverbial worm on a hook then.” A werewolf came trotting up, nudging at Nessa’s hand. She grinned and patted him on the head. “Nice wolfy, wanna scratch behind your ears?” His tongue swiped out and gave her a lick. She giggled.

Neman growled. “Back off, Lucas, unless you want to be neutered!” Neman hissed. The werewolf gave a yelp, turning to bolt away. “Do not encourage him, Nessa; he has a keen sense of smell.”

“Oh.”

“I do enjoy a touch of daylight,” Draco said, striding forward.

“Aren’t you meant to be turning into dust or something in the light?” Vanessa asked the vampire.

“My dear lady, that is a common human misconception, along with steaks, garlic, holy water—the list goes on. The sun has little effect on vampires other than to give us a tan.”

“Only a blowtorch could do that for you,” was the dry reply of Lucas, who’d shifted into human form again, this time with his clothes on.

Neman had had enough. “Let’s move.” He pulled his woman close and they started down the hill, demons, humans, werewolves and vampires all following.

\* \* \* \* \*

Pausing, Nessa watched her commanding warrior start to give orders.

“Derkin, your army takes point, werewolves and vampires on either side; we’re going to try and outflank them.”

Derkin gave a nod, ordering his soldiers across the barrier. Lucas shifted along with thirty other wolves, all howling as they dashed ahead. The vampires followed after the werewolves.

“Slazzamar, I have a task for you. Go back to the Zigg and make sure Jezebel and the armies follow you through.”

Slazzamar gave a nod and vanished.

Neman pulled Nessa back into his arms, and within a split second they were in Thomas Armod’s house in L.A., inside Thomas’s office. Thomas was already standing by a bookshelf with Darren.

“Nessa!” exclaimed Darren when he saw them. “That no-good elf stranded me here.”

Neman was ignoring him. “Sweetness, I need some of your blood.”

With complete trust in Neman, she offered her hand to him. He



pulled one of his smaller but sharp blades out. Quickly, before she had even noticed, he sliced open a fingertip. She gasped when the small amount of blood started to flow. Neman wrapped a cloth around it to soak it up, before pulling it away and tucking it into a strap of his armor.

Nessa found herself swept into his arms as his mouth crushed down on hers in a deep, passionate, hungry kiss, like that of a desperate man.

"Come back to me alive," she whispered when he broke the kiss. She was just as desperate to keep him with her, but she knew he would not stay.

"I intend to, sweetness." He released her from his arms, stepped back, and vanished.

Nessa's eyes remained riveted on the spot where he had stood, and she heaved a heavy sigh.

Darren came up to put his hand on her shoulder. "I know how you're feeling, honey. If that elf doesn't come back to me alive, I'm going to kill him myself."

"Right then," said Thomas, breaking them out of their thoughts. "I have the perimeter secured and all the men on high alert. Come, please, let's make you comfortable. I know you will need some food and to rest."

Nessa sighed again, glancing at Darren. "Suppose we'd better make the best of it," Darren said with his arm around her shoulder as they followed Thomas.

\* \* \* \* \*

Jezebel stood with Belshazzar behind the army of demons who waited for their command. The seal was almost broken. Xenith the Sorcerer held his hand above his head, muttering over and over; to her delight, the large stone gate of the Ziggurat exploded.

The mage dropped his arms, turned and walked several paces backwards. "I have upheld my part, my debt is paid; I want no further part in this," Xenith told her. Jezebel nodded, and Xenith "popped" out.

"Search every inch—I want the Chosen One and Neman brought to me!" Shadow demons and her soldiers flooded into the Ziggurat.

"Looking for someone, my Queen?" a familiar voice said. Jezebel swiveled, seeing Slazzamar leaning against a pillar just outside the temple where they stood.

"You are aware I'm going to skin you alive, and then I'm going to finish feeding your human to my guards," threatened Jezebel, not failing to notice he was in battle regalia and heavily armed.

Slazzamar gave a bored yawn. "Promises, promises. The Chosen One is safely hidden in the Outer Realm; if you want her, you're going to have to fight."

Jezebel's eyes narrowed, her rage a like a simmering cauldron ready to explode. "Kill him," she ordered Gremlock, who started to charge his magic.

Slazzamar smiled, blew her a kiss and vanished.

"Follow him, Gremlock, then gather everyone to their location. I want Slazzamar's head on a platter and the Chosen One in my grasp before this night is over!" Gremlock bowed and followed after Slazzamar.

"Do not forget Neman—he poses the greater threat," said Belshazzar.

## **Dangerous Moonlight by Angela Castle**

---

“Once I have the Chosen One, Neman will fall. I’m going to kill two birds with one stone.” She patted the jewel nestled between her breasts. “I have a plan that cannot fail.”

## **Chapter Seventeen**

Slazzamar ran the last three hundred yards across the plain, meeting Neman just at the entrance to the Sulfur Canyon. He knew someone would be close behind him and, sure enough, Gremlock appeared and threw an energy bolt toward his back. Neman dove forward, reflecting the bolt with the shield of Anu.

"Talk about the skin of my teeth." Slazzamar's lungs expanded rapidly to take in more air. "You wanted me to draw them out; here they come." Neman gave a nod of approval. He turned, but Gremlock vanished again. Slazzamar knew he was reporting back to Jezebel and Belshazzar. Very soon the plains would fill up with their armies.

"I want you to stay with Mark. He's a strong fighter but still only human."

Slazzamar paused to watch Neman pull a crimson-stained cloth

from his armor. He scented Nessa's blood on it. Any tracker demon would easily pick up on it—another trick to make sure they believed she was being hidden beyond the canyon to lure them in. Neman took the lead, crossing the boundary, and Slazzamar followed almost immediately, feeling the effects of this place. Both his demon and elf side reacted against it; his magic felt heavy and oppressive. Closing his eyes for a brief moment, he tried to summon a simple spell, but felt like he was striking a wet match. It was not going to work. Even with Derkin's large army already in the canyon waiting, and the werewolves and vampires as well, they were still hopelessly outnumbered ten to one. More likely than not, they would die in battle today.

Still, Slazzamar had a sense of self-assurance that no matter the outcome, this was the right thing to do. Darren had brought such light and life into his existence in the brief time he had known and loved him. He would die here today with honor and pride, knowing he was fighting not just for Nessa and the fulfillment of this prophecy, but for the freedom to love Darren without fear; he was battling so they could have a life together.

\* \* \* \* \*

Jezebel gazed across the barren plains of the Outer Realm.

"They have gone beyond into the Sulfur Canyon, my Queen," reported Gremlock.

"Very clever—he knows no magic or powers can be used there."

"Derkin!" hissed Belshazzar in anger, "I can smell the vile filth."

"I thought you would relish this opportunity to finish your enemy

off once and for all.”

“That I shall, that I shall, then take control of his whole quadrant.”

“Good for you.” She walked across the plains, every sense she possessed on high alert. Stopping just before the entrance to the canyon, Jezebel sniffed at the air. It tingled with an overuse of teleports from this spot, and a few were still fresh. She held up her hand and her whole army stilled. Every instinct was telling her this was just a ruse, to draw them out and away from Neman’s precious Chosen One. Once inside the canyon, all creatures became vulnerable without their powers. Not for a moment did she believe he would have put her in harm’s way. Fernos the Kat demon came charging over with a cloth between his paws.

“’Tis her, my Queen—the scent of the Chosen One.”

Jezebel looked down at the blood-stained cloth. Did Neman think her such a fool? “Belshazzar, you have command of my soldiers. I’m sure even you can manage to kill Neman’s little army. Spare no one but Neman—I need him alive for my plan to work. Also spare Slazzamar the Sneak; I would like the privilege of peeling the skin from his worthless body.”

“Where are you going?” Belshazzar looked at her.

“To play teleport roulette.” With that, she tracked through one of the residual teleports. The first one came out at the Ziggurat. She popped back to the barren plains and then went through another traceable port. Landing in the Human Realm, once again she glanced about with an evil smile. She saw a huge painting of Neman’s Ziggurat on the wall, and heard human voices. Something told Jezebel she’d just gotten lucky.

\* \* \* \* \*

Neman watched Mark check his weapons for the eighth time. They had faced demons before, but never en masse like this.

“We’re going to die, aren’t we?”

Slazzamar shrugged his shoulders as the mass approached. “Probably.”

“Is it worth it?” Mark asked.

“Yes.”

“Typical answer of a man in love,” Mark muttered. “Still, a dead demon is one less demon I’ll have to worry about later on—no offence, Derkin.”

“None taken, lad.”

\* \* \* \* \*

Nessa sighed for the millionth time. Both she and Darren were staring at the table laid with indulgent foods, but neither of them had the slightest inclination to eat; how could she when the man she loved was out risking his life for her?

“Try to eat something,” Darren encouraged. “If not for you, then for them.” He pointed to her stomach. “You have two little ravenous creatures inside there.”

He was right; she didn’t want to end up in the same state as before. She took a piece of the pizza and tore a chunk off, chewing mechanically, then forcing herself to swallow. Slowly she finished off the pizza slice,

swallowing it down with a tall glass of orange juice.

Thomas slammed the kitchen door open, and the panicked look on his face made Nessa and Darren jump to their feet in fright.

“What is it, what’s going on?” Sudden gunfire and an explosion sounded through the house.

“We’ve been breached by a demon—get her out now!” Her two bodyguards yanked their guns from their body holsters, grabbed her arm and dragged her toward the other end of the kitchen, racing out the door. Darren followed close behind. Before they had even reached the back door, the whole kitchen seemed to explode. Nessa caught a glimpse of a woman dressed in deep green silk, before she was dragged down a long corridor.

“Holy shit, it’s Jezebel!” panted Darren.

“You have to run, Ms. Myles,” her bodyguard said. Nessa panted, running as fast as she could down the long hallway. But the woman suddenly appeared in front of them. Nessa gasped, skidding to a halt. Her bodyguards lifted their weapons, firing at the woman. She flashed again, and suddenly Nessa’s bodyguards were thrown with a thick thud against a wall. Nessa watched in horror as they were lifted and she heard their bones suddenly snap. Oh God, that evil bitch had killed them. She barely registered Darren taking her hand, yanking her forward toward the mansion’s exit.

“I’ll hold her off. You go, Nessa!”

“No, you can’t—she’ll kill you.”

With another burst of demonic power, Darren was flung sideways. Nessa fell to the ground panting. The tall, slim woman in green flowing robes, her eyes glowing red, strode purposely forward. Nessa crawled over to Darren’s unconscious body to shield him. More men came running



around to fire at the woman, but any attempt to subdue her by gunfire or sword was met with a fierce power bolt knocking them off their feet.

“Stop! Don’t kill them!” Nessa screamed at her. She turned her eyes to her. “Leave them alone. It’s me you want.”

Darren was stirring; he gripped her arm. “Nessa, no,” he groaned.

Jezebel glared down at her. “An act of self-sacrifice; human stupidity will never cease to amaze me. Come willingly, then, and I will spare these pathetic mortals.”

Nessa swallowed, tugging herself away from Darren and rising to her feet. She looked Jezebel straight in the eyes to show she held no fear. “Why don’t you just kill me?”

“Oh, that would be too easy now. If I kill you I would have no leverage to bring Neman to his knees.”

Nessa bit back her rage and the sarcastic comments on the tip of her tongue. “Leave Neman alone. You have me—isn’t that what you wanted?”

Jezebel stepped forward, gripping her arm. Nessa felt the power surge and “pop.” Daylight disappeared, replaced by darkness and heat.

“I’ve been trying to bring that upstart god to his knees for thousands of years. With his first wife, it was almost too easy with such a weak-willed mortal. She wanted immortality and was easy to manipulate. I almost had him, but the fool had not given him the correct dose of the drug.”

“But why? Why kill his whole family?”

“Why not? They were of no use to me. But you, my little human, will be of great use to me. Neman will fall, and I will have the power I need to conquer each and every Realm. I have worked too hard to obtain

the power I have today, and no little upstart will ruin it."

"Lady, you are a seriously fucked-up bitch!"

Jezebel swung her around, slapping her across the face. "Respect your Queen, mortal." Fire exploded across the side of Nessa's face, but she held back the whimper of pain. "You can shove your respect up your royal ass for all I care!"

"You are strong willed, I grant you that, but not for much longer." She pulled a shimmering jewel from beneath her green silken dress. Her red eyes glowed evilly as she held it out.

Consumed by a sudden curiosity at the sight of the pretty blue gem, Nessa took it into her hands without thinking. What was it?

"Take care now, mortal," Jezebel warned, and began babbling away in a strange tongue. Nessa had no clue as to what she was saying, but she was suddenly feeling dizzy. She gripped the jewel tightly as the whole world tilted, descending into complete darkness.

\* \* \* \* \*

A head flew backwards as the sword of Anu sliced with complete accuracy, never missing its mark. Another demon was pushed against his shield; the creature screamed, disintegrating into dust. Neman charged on into the battle, slicing and hacking every demon that crossed his path. The floors of the canyon ran red with demon blood. Neman looked up through the haze of dust the shuffling feet of demons and their combatants was kicking up. Jezebel stood there at a distance, watching him. Charged with rage, he battled his way through to get to her. She turned, heading toward the barren plains. Neman followed, pausing only

to kill a demon on the verge of killing Mark as Slazzamar was occupied battling two others.

“Thanks, man,” Mark said, reloading his hand gun with another clip and drawing his sword, then charging back into the thick of it.

Looking up once again, Jezebel smiled evilly at Neman. She was now beyond the canyon and could use her magic. Neman charged forward, his bloodied blade at the ready to strike her down.

“If you want to see your beloved Chosen One alive ever again, I would not do that,” she warned, and Neman skidded to a halt, fear suddenly gripping him. She couldn’t have Vanessa.

“You lie!”

“Oh do I? Did you think you could let mortals protect her? Mind you, I should have killed Slazzamar’s little pet human; maybe I will return and finish that little task later on.”

Neman took another menacing step toward the demon queen. She was telling the truth, but how?

“I followed through your ports till I hit—what is it the mortals say?—the ‘jackpot.’”

Neman’s heart sunk; it was true then. “Where is she? I swear, if…”

“Oh shut it, Neman. Spare me the dramatic ‘if you’ve harmed her’ speech. I have your human; come to my domain and see for yourself. And leave your little toys behind.” She looked at his sword and shield and then “popped” out.

Neman quickly tossed aside the shield and sword of Anu and followed her though the port.

## **Chapter Eighteen**

Killing Jezebel was too good for the glorified demon queen; Neman wanted to make her suffer as he had these past four thousand years. She had taken everything from him, and now she had taken Vanessa; she was going to pay. Flames roared up, licking at his skin as he crossed the thin stone bridge. Ahead was a deep blue swirling light. He ran forward, taking care where he placed his feet, as one wrong move would plunge him into the pit. Here he could not teleport. He had felt the dampening spell the moment he'd stepped into Jezebel's domain.

Finally Vanessa came into view. She had been placed across a stone blood altar, where the demons came to give their gifts to their ruling bodies. Her eyes were closed and her body still. Neman saw the soft rise and fall of her chest. Relief flooded through him that she was still alive. As to her state and the state of the children, that he had yet to determine; if that demon witch had laid one damned finger upon her, she would want

nothing more than death when he was through with her.

Drawing closer, he stepped up to gaze down on her pale face. He dared not touch her lest he trigger any booby trap Jezebel had placed upon her. He had no doubt that she had placed such a trap and, glancing down her body, Neman saw it. Cradled in Vanessa's unconscious hands, a blue jewel glowed. Neman's heart almost stopped in his chest; she held his powers, the very ones that had been stolen from him! Every instinct screamed at him that this was a trap. That fucked-up bitch Jezebel was going to pay. Four thousand years he had hunted and tracked to no avail to recapture his powers, restoring what was rightfully his. Now the two things he wanted most in his long, long life lay before him. Yet he dared not touch.

"Go ahead, take what is yours." Jezebel slinked out from the shadows.

Neman raised his head to meet Jezebel's evil red eyes. As she watched him, her gaze moved to Vanessa. "I have linked your powers in with her life force; if you take your powers back, it will of course kill her, yet if she keeps them, the power itself will kill her. You know very well that no one not born of a god can take possession of these powers." It was the only thing that had kept Jezebel from taking more power, even though she craved it. It would kill her. It was the only wise law the universe had ever instilled, to keep true evil from ever becoming so powerful that even the gods themselves may not be able to deal with it.

She stood to the far side of the cavern, watching as he approached Vanessa. With his powers restored he could have his vengeance on the witch. Yet if he chose his powers, they could not be restored in time to stop Vanessa and the children from dying. She was going to die either way, unless Jezebel let her go.

"Release her," he demanded.

"Oh, I think you are in no position to make demands of me, Nanna.

But I am not without mercy. I will let her live and birth the children, raise them as my own little demon spawn. With them on my side, I will be unstoppable."

"What is it you want?" He never took his eyes from Jezebel as she stepped forward.

"Surrender yourself to me, Nanna. I will take the rest of your powers and you can live as my pet. You see, no one has to die."

Neman palmed the blade by his side, keeping his face neutral to the tumultuous rage that he felt inside. But what choice did he have?

"Why should I believe you will keep your word, Jezebel? What is to stop you from just killing us all?"

"Oh, you have my most solemn vow I will not kill your sons."

He did believe that, as her hunger for power was too great, and after they were born there would be nothing to stop her killing Vanessa and him. He laid his sword down beside Vanessa. "As long as she lives and continue to live, I will surrender."

Jezebel gave a smile of satisfaction. "I knew you would see it my way." Jezebel waved her hand toward Nessa, and she started to stir.

Neman forced himself not to look at Vanessa as he walked around the altar toward Jezebel.

"On your knees, Moon God," Jezebel snapped, her eyes and features hardening.

He would endure Hell itself to ensure his Vanessa lived. "Whoa, talk about a ten-ton truck, what the...?" he heard Vanessa say as he fell to his knees before Jezebel.

"This won't hurt much, Neman," Jezebel added, reaching out to

touch him.

\* \* \* \* \*

Nessa looked at the glowing jewel in her hand. Glancing around the cavern, she saw Neman on his knees before Jezebel. At first she was confused—why was he on his knees? She sat up, swinging her legs over the stone slab she lay on. What had that bitch done? Her hand found something else; lying beside her was one of Neman's swords. Without hesitation she grabbed the hilt of the heavy blade and jumped off the slab. Her confusion turned into rage that this bitch dare even think of touching her man.

"You dare put one hand on him, and you'll discover the meaning of shish kabob, lady!" Nessa stalked forward with Neman's sword in one hand, the jewel in the other.

"Vanessa, no, stay back!" Neman turned his eyes on her.

Jezebel waved her hand and Nessa found herself flung backwards, the sword clattering across to the other side of the cavern. Nessa still clutched at the blue glowing jewel. Winded, she slowly got to her feet. What was this thing? Was this Neman's god powers? Why did she have it?

"Leave her be!" roared Neman.

Nessa struck upon the idea that she should crush it; maybe if she released the power within, his powers could be restored to him. Nessa put it between her palms and squeezed hard.

"Vanessa, no!" He was off his knees, racing towards her, but it was too late—the jewel cracked under the pressure of her palms. "It will kill

you!"

Blinding blue light burst forth; Nessa slammed her eyes shut to keep from being blinded. Holding out the crushed jewel, she felt an immense power surge through her arms and into her body. Gasping, she fell to her knees at the force of it. Her head swam with voices, images; so much information poured forth into her brain, she clutched at her head.

"Vanessa!"

She was barely able to hear Neman's voice above the roar, but he had her in his arms. Nessa's body convulsed. She heard the cackle of laughter coming from Jezebel.

"You, see, Neman you can never win against me!" Jezebel's tormenting laughter echoed throughout the cavern.

"Oh my sweet love, what were you thinking? Only those born of a god can withstand their power. Don't die on me—I love you too much."

Trying hard to focus, managing to push the noise in her head to the background, Nessa opened her eyes only to see the pain in his golden eyes. Suddenly everything clicked into place; an understanding fell over her mind, body and precious unborn children.

"Did you say you love me?"

"Yes, sweetness, I love you. You are my *ze ki angu*. I would rather die a thousand deaths than live without you."

"*Ze ki angu*?"

"Sumerian for 'my beloved one.'"

She reached out a hand to touch his face. "I like that." The reflection of a blade behind Neman's head caught Nessa's eye. With a surge of anger and power, Nessa threw Neman off and blasted Jezebel



right off her feet, before she could swing the sword into Neman's back. Jezebel hit the back of the cavern wall with a loud thump. Neman fell back with his jaw open, his eyes wide in obvious shock at what she had just done. Nessa felt alive, empowered and strong; she'd managed to tune down the whispering in her head to only two sweet little voices helping her, guiding her. She suddenly knew what she had to do. She gave Neman a grin. "Some people are just so rude." She patted his arm as he stumbled to his feet. "Why don't you go help the others; the bitch and I are going to have a little womanly chat." Grabbing hold of the top of his battle armor, she yanked him up, placing a hard kiss on his mouth before whispering, "I love you too, darling." She rose to her feet, stalking toward Jezebel, and grabbed the struggling demon by her long black hair before they both vanished.

\* \* \* \* \*

Shock and confusion coursed through Neman as he tried to make sense of what had just occurred. Vanessa had not died from absorbing his god powers. To him, it could mean only one thing: that Vanessa hadn't been born mortal after all. But how had he missed that? And what was she? No, it didn't matter who she was—she was the one thing that mattered most to Neman, the woman he loved. She was powerful and could take care of herself. Right now he needed to get back to the battle. Swiftly finding his way out of the underground labyrinth far enough to teleport directly back to the Sulfur Canyon, he retrieved the sword and shield of Anu from where he'd left them, then ran back into the thick of battle.

Derkin was still battling Belshazzar, and the elf was holding his own with Mark at his back, though Mark had deep scratch wounds down his back. The wolves had killed quite a few of the Kat demons; Vladimir's

bloodied hands suggested he too had had his fair share of the kill.

“Forty-two!” Vladimir jumped forward, cutting another demon across the throat, then launched upon him, plunging his sword down into its heart. “Forty-three!” The blond werewolf by his side snarled and leapt into another demon, to retaliate on the vampire’s score.

Neman’s reactions kicked in; he swung his blade and charged forward, slicing into a team of three demons bearing down on a lone werewolf. All three were in pieces before the werewolf could even react.

A large explosion suddenly ripped right through the canyon like an atomic shock wave, stunning everyone including himself. Every blade fell, the fighting ceasing in a split second. Every head turned in the direction of the stunning woman who walked into their midst. Actually, her feet glided, never touching the ground. Nessa, looking every bit the goddess, strode as casually as if taking a summer stroll in the park, every inch of her vibrating with power.

She had his powers but he didn’t care. Just seeing her was enough to make his heart stop in his chest.

“There is no more war,” she proclaimed. “The fighting stops here and now—it’s time to take out the trash.” She pointed a finger at Belshazzar. “You and yours be gone.” With a wave of her hand the Shadow King vanished, along with all his demon warriors. She glanced around at the remainder of Jezebel’s army. Her eyes softened as she turned toward Slazzamar.

“Slazzamar, Darren needs you—he was hurt when we were attacked.” He looked at her with a worried expression on his face. She touched him on the shoulder, and he vanished. Her stare turned hard and cold. “Let it be known that if any creature in any Realm dares mess with me, or any of those I care for, they will be dealt with harshly. Begone from whence you came.” Every demon, werewolf and vampire vanished, leaving only Mark, Neman and Nessa.

"I thought no one could use powers in this place," a startled Mark commented. His shoulders started to sag under the weight of his injuries.

"Anyone but a god, or in this case, a new goddess," Neman said with his eyes on Nessa as she approached with a half grin. "The only way you can sustain my powers is if you were born as one of us."

"Yes, well, that's another story. I'll explain later," Nessa promised as she turned to Mark, laying her hand over his bloodied shoulder.

"Thank you for defending me." Instantly the flesh knitted, the wounds disappearing altogether. He gave a sigh of relief as the pain left him. Before he could say anything, he disappeared. She turned her beautiful eyes on Neman. "Shall we go home? We need to talk, and I don't want to do it out here."

Neman didn't hesitate, stepping forward to sweep her up in his arms. In the next instant they were back in the Ziggurat.

The whole place had been torn apart by Jezebel's and Belshazzar's demons, leaving it in such a mess that would take months to clean up. Nessa pulled out of his arms to look around with a sigh.

"I guess this'll be my last official use of the powers, before I have to hand them over." With a wave of her hand, the whole place was set right. "I've also replaced the seals on the temple, so it will continue to go undetected. This has been a hell of a buzz. Your powers are trippy, Neman," she said with a mischievous grin.

"Who are you, Vanessa Myles?" Neman asked calmly.

"Shhhh, they are talking." She then closed her eyes as if listening to something. "Okay, my darlings, back to you now."

Neman was puzzled—who was she talking to? He couldn't feel the presence of anyone else about the Zigg. When she suddenly swayed on

her feet, Neman dashed to catch her; instantly he knew the power she'd held had vanished.

"Sweetness, are you all right? What happened?" She opened her eyes, her pale eyes looking up at him with a smile, and wrapped her arms around his neck.

"I was never born of a god or goddess, Neman. I'm still just human."

Neman shook his head. "But that's not possible. My powers should have killed you, and where are they now?"

"I think you forgot two little but very important people." She smiled and took hold of his hands, drawing them down to the swell of her lower stomach. It suddenly all made sense. The babies, his children, sired of a god.

"The powers were borrowed, but you know they cannot go back to you now. The twins have them, but they have left me with a little gift."

"What gift is that?"

"Seems my babies have no wish to see their mother die."

Neman clued in on what she meant. "You're immortal?"

Nessa gave a nod and a grin. Joy spread through Neman; without his powers, he could have never given her immortality. His children, even in the womb, had given him what he truly desired: Vanessa, for the rest of time.

"A gift most worthy of you, my love." He placed his hand upon her stomach. "Well done, my little doves."

"They heard you." Nessa snuck her arms up, winding them around his neck.

"Good—I cannot imagine ever living the rest of my existence without you."

"I love you, Neman. How did I get so darn lucky to score every woman's fantasy rolled into one?" Her eyes shone with love. Neman chuckled.

"Yes, I know, I'm your hunk-a-licious god."

"He made a joke! Gee, the heavens must be falling in you made a..."

He crushed her against him as he possessed her mouth with his own, knowing when nothing else could shut her up, this never failed. He pulled back, seeing that carnal look swimming in her eyes. There were still many unanswered questions.

"What did you do to Jezebel?" By the look on Vanessa's face, she had done something very naughty.

"Can I tell you later? Right now, let's make the best of this time alone." She wiggled her eyebrows at him and Neman laughed, picked her up in his arms and carried her up the stairs two by two. A feeling of déjà vu came over him, from the first time he had brought her here.

"Hmmm, baby, I loooove the way you look in this thing," she purred. "But it's bloody difficult to get off!" she protested about his battle regalia. In a flash, the armor and the rest of his clothes were gone along with her own.

"Hmmm, much better, but there's one more thing."

She was nibbling on his throat, and Neman pulled back to regard her. "What be that, my love?"

"Before I get larger than a whale with these twins, you're going to make an honest woman out of me."

Neman chuckled as he walked through the door of their room. Out of habit, he shut the door and flicked the security switch to secure the room before carrying her to the bed and laying her down gently. He crawled up over her, dipping his head down to absorb the scent of her skin; she still smelled like strawberries and vanilla to him.

“And how do you wish me to do that, my lady?” he teased and began nibbling a path down her throat and over her collarbone.

“Typical, typical man or god, if it’s not you have to draw them a bloody map, I swear...” Neman cut her off with another deep probing kiss, his tongue dancing with hers. He sucked and nibbled on her lower lip. When he pulled back, her breath came in short little pants, eyes darkened with lust.

“I have every intention of making you my wife, sweetness. I wouldn’t have it any other way.”

## **Chapter Nineteen**

Nessa had never seen such a round full moon. It shone brightly down on the open rooftop garden on top of the Moon Temple Casino in Las Vegas. Two days after the epic battle, Neman had informed everyone of the wedding in Vegas at his brother's casino. Sin had smiled down at her when Neman had introduced them. Although the exact replica of Neman, Sin was very different from Neman in his gestures, mannerisms, even his attitude and the feel of the power coming off the powerful god.

Nessa stood before Thomas Armod in a shimmering silver dress, feeling more beautiful than she ever had in her life—or was it the fact that Neman made her feel beautiful and adored, as she gazed up at him? He looked extremely tasty in a black tux with open collar. His smile told her he knew what she was thinking and couldn't wait to start the honeymoon. His shoulder-length black hair was pulled neatly back with a black leather tie. In the moonlight he seemed to take on an extra sheen of ethereal

beauty that took Nessa's breath away. She had to pinch herself several times to make sure she wasn't dreaming; all this hard, muscled, masculine god-man was hers. The love shining in his golden eyes told her he was, and she was his.

Darren stood off to her left while Mark stood at Neman's right as Thomas performed the ceremony in ancient Sumerian. The witnesses included Slazzamar, Mona, a disappointed Lord Derkin, Lucas, Draco and Neman's twin brother Sin. Thomas finished the last of the ceremony, and Neman pulled her close to kiss her hungrily.

"All mine, wife," he whispered into her mouth.

"And you are all mine, husband." She smiled back. The small gathering broke out in applause, and they reluctantly pulled away from each other. She gave Darren a hug while Mark congratulated Neman, before they moved away.

"Another one bites the dust," said Sin as he approached them, slapping his hand on his brother's shoulder. "It's good to see my brother happy; for too many centuries he's been a walking misery." He looked at Nessa with a twinkling, mischievous smile. "Are you going to give your new brother-in-law a kiss?"

Neman growled at him and kept a tight, possessive arm around her waist. "Like bloody hell she will. You're a rogue and a womanizer. Stay away from my wife, brother." Sin chuckled, and Nessa gave an amused laugh.

"Wait till love bites you in the butt," she warned him.

"Oh no, by the mother Goddess, that will never happen to me," Sin said in mock horror.

It was Neman's turn to chuckle.



Lord Derkin, Lucas and Draco approached. "Damn shame, lassie—we coulda had some fun together." Derkin grinned. Nessa just shook her head. "But there are many questions left unanswered since the battle, lad. Are you gonna tell us what happened?"

"All in good time," Neman said. "How are things in the Outer Realm?" he asked Slazzamar.

"Unbelievably quiet, so peaceful it's almost scary."

"And the Lower Realm?" He looked at Derkin. The larger-than-life demon warlord had somehow made his horns disappear; he looked almost human apart from his sheer size.

"Demons are demons—they still have souls ta torture, blood ta drink, and are pissed off ya denyin' em liberal access ta the Outer Realm. Ye gonna tell us what happened now, lass? How canna one mortal woman get so powerful?" He stared at Nessa. "And why dunna I sense any of that power now?"

"You want to explain that bit, love?" She glanced up at her new husband. Neman cleared his throat and explained what Jezebel had done, then how Vanessa had safely accessed his god powers via the twins she carried.

"So you have repaired the fracture in the Realms?" asked Vladimir, who had been standing next to Lucas.

Nessa shook her head. "What I did was only a temporary patch job; it will hold everything at bay for a while, but then the cracks will start showing. It should hold long enough, until these two are ready to take on their roles." She gave her stomach a pat.

Derkin gave her a curious look. "What did ya do ta Belshazzar, lass? Not knowing where my enemy is is unsettling."

“And to Jezebel, for that matter,” Slazzamar added.

Nessa grinned at their audience. “You can take that holiday you want, Derkin, for now they are sealed inside their own hells. As for Jezebel, I didn’t kill her if that’s what you’re thinking, but she won’t be causing anyone trouble ever again. I left her wandering around up here on Earth, stripped of all her powers and cursed to live an ordinary human life.”

Derkin threw back his head, barking with laughter. Darren and Slazzamar grinned at her, but the others looked at her in stunned silence.

“I thought it only fitting, since her hunger for power was so great. And the best part of the curse is that she can never utter a word of her former self to anyone.”

“I would have killed her.” Neman’s tone was low. She glanced at him and gave his hand a squeeze.

“Ye are a cruel lass, and I love it. Just remember, if you ever tire of god-boy here, I think ye know where ta find me.” He gave her a wink.

Nessa just smiled at him. “Thanks, but I’m good.”

Neman glared at Derkin. “Even though Vanessa does not have any powers, for all intents and purposes, to anyone in the Lower or Outer Realm who even thinks of coming after her again, she does,” Neman told them.

“I gotcha, lad—will keep the gossip hovering for as long as possible.”

“Keep your nose out of trouble, all of you,” Neman warned all the demons present.

Derkin gave a grin. “I’m gonna enjoy me a nice long vacation. If ye need me services ever again, laddie, feel free to holla. I’ll be leaving ye to

enjoy your celebration now; if she be mine I'd not be wastin' time with talk." With a laugh, he charged his powers and disappeared.

"That goes the same for us, in the 'need a friend' department." Draco stepped forward. "It has been a pleasure. Not often in this day and age do I get to swing a sword again and kill something."

The werewolf gave a snort. "Bleeding Toff, you kill brain cells off every day just by breathing."

"He's just sore because I won the bet, fifty-three over forty-two." The vampire's lips twitched up in amusement.

"Just because you cheated." Lucas snorted, clearly not amused.

"You know, it's not a bet unless you bet on something other than a score," Nessa pointed out. The two looked at each other.

"I think the lady has a point."

"How about a new wager?" Valknar suggested.

Neman glared at her for encouraging them. She just grinned broadly.

"I appreciated you helping, but take your bickering elsewhere and stay out of trouble. I would hate to have to be forced into hunting either of you or your clans," Neman warned.

"I take care of my own." Draco's tone held a warning of its own.

"As do I," Lucas agreed.

"Careful, you two—it sounds like the start of a beautiful friendship," Nessa told them with amusement.

"Oh hell no," growled Lucas, glaring at Draco.

Nessa smothered the urge to laugh out loud.

"We'll talk about the wager later," he told the vampire, before giving Nessa a smile that would melt the heart of any red-blooded woman. "Good day, sweet lady. I must say, you always do smell delicious." Neman growled at him. "Worry not, I have no designs on your wife. I wish you every happiness." Lucas's blue eyes seemed to glimmer with secrets. He gave a bow to them before vanishing.

Valknar shrugged his shoulders. "It is no fun insulting him behind his back. Good day, lady Vanessa; Neman, it's been a pleasure." With a wave of his hand and a bow, he too charged his powers and vanished.

Nessa could no longer contain her laughter. "What? I think they're hilarious," Nessa defended when Neman shot her a look, but his face softened into a smile.

"So what's going to happen now?" Mark asked.

"There are still many demons to take care of topside," Neman told him.

"Something tells me that you're not going to be around to lead the charge anymore."

"I may have new priorities, but Moon Shadow Agency will continue normal operations. I was hoping that someone else may take a new leading role." He turned to look at Slazzamar, who took a moment to understand what Neman was saying. He straightened up. "What, me?" Slazzamar looked bewildered.

"You've got to be kidding," Mark said indignantly.

"You're a strong fighter, Slazzamar, and good at getting out of sticky situations. I think you, Mark and Darren would make a good team."

"Like hell. He's still a demon, and you can't trust a demon," Mark protested.

"Oh, get your head out of your upstart ass..." Darren jumped in to defend Slazzamar. "Half demon, yes, which makes him perfect for taking lead of the hunt, and he more than saved your ass out on the battlefield."

Neman turned to Mark. "I trust him, which should make it good enough for you. Darren can learn the ropes of your job, which will also take the pressure off you—that is, if you want to take it." He looked at Darren and Slazzamar.

"Well, I'm willing if you are," Darren told him. "Think about it—no more Slazzamar the Sneak, but Slazz the rogue demon hunter and hero." Darren gave him a cocky grin.

Slazzamar smiled in response. "All right, I'll do it."

"My life is going to be hell," Mark grumbled.

Neman moved to give Mark a slap on the back with a smile. "Think of it as a new adventure, my friend. I'm not vanishing off the face of the planet; if any problems arise that the three of you can't handle, then call me. Till then, the Zigg is yours." Mark gave a resigned sigh.

"Don't worry, Mark. Things will work out fine, you'll see," said Nessa. She gave Mark a warm smile, pulling away to give him a pat on the arm, then went to talk to Thomas.

"And where are you two going?" she heard Darren ask Neman.

"I think after a few thousand years of demon hunting, I've earned a long break, and it's going to start with my honeymoon."

"You don't have to worry over my protection anymore," she told Thomas.

"I shall ensure her protection," Neman assured him. Thomas gave a nod of acknowledgement. "You do not need to serve the Moon Temple anymore, Armod, but that is your choice of course. My brother is still the resident Moon God, so you'd best see him."

"Don't palm him off on me," Sin said with annoyance.

"You would have me sever ties?" Thomas asked with a touch of fear.

"Of course not. If you wish to contribute to the cause, join with Moon Shadow Agency. Talk to Mark and Slazzamar; we can always use a man with your knowledge and resources."

Thomas looked relieved that he would be able to do something to help. "So I will still have access to your Ziggurat?" he asked with the eagerness of a child in a toy store.

"Of course you will," Neman confirmed.

"Glad that's all settled then. Now, time for the party?" Nessa asked with a lopsided grin.

Neman came up behind her, slid his arm around her waist, pulled her away from the small group and held her tight against him. "Can't we skip the party, sweet wife?" an exasperated Neman asked against her ear. "We're married; let's go celebrate as we should. I can hardly wait to be inside you again." The words came out in a low growl that made Nessa shiver, her body alive and heating under his intense gaze and closeness.

"Well, when you put it that way, let's blow this joint."

"Ahh, guys, we're gonna skip the reception," Nessa informed the remaining wedding guests as Neman easily picked her up off her feet. She snuggled into his arms.

"Oh, don't worry about us—you go have fun. I know I will."

Darren grinned, his arm around Slazzamar.

“Play nice,” was Neman’s parting remark as they vanished from the rooftop and the shortest wedding reception in history.

\* \* \* \* \*

Nessa gasped as the warm liquid oozed over her swollen stomach and down between the lines of her naked breasts. Neman lay beside her, and she watched him through half-hooded eyes as he chose a plump red strawberry from a bowl on the side. He swirled the berry into the melted chocolate, trailing it up and circling her hardened nipple in the brown sweet before attending to the other, lathing it across until both were well coated. Next he made it journey up the valley of her breasts to her throat before lifting it to her waiting mouth, putting it between her teeth.

“Hold it,” came his husky command; then he bent his head to retrace the path the chocolate had created, licking with long strokes of his tongue every drop of chocolate, licking her clean between her deep valley, then taking a full nipple into his mouth and sucking on the sensitive bud.

Nessa fought not to bite into the strawberry; she groaned low in her throat and fisted the sheets as he finished with the first breast and then moved to the second. She was dripping with desire, her whole body aflame under his ministrations. When he had finished with the second breast, he came back to her mouth, covering it and crushing the strawberry. The juice pulp and chocolate slid into her mouth, making her moan with the combined effect of his tongue probing in to taste both her, the chocolate and the strawberry.

He pulled back to allow her to swallow the delectable treat. The smile reaching his golden eyes was pure pleasure and mischief. “Never

## Dangerous Moonlight by Angela Castle

---

was I fond of sweets, but you have put a whole new perspective on sweet treats, my lovely wife."

Nessa grinned, licking her lips of the remnant strawberry and chocolate mix. "If I remember, it was you who started it off by smelling of chocolate. Why did the anointing smell like those things anyway?"

"I have no idea; my guess would be that they found the one thing we could not resist." He moved over her, shifting between her legs and looking down on her swollen belly half coated still in chocolate.

"Considering how drunk I was at the time, I don't think it would have mattered in the slightest to me. Just how are we going to explain to the twins that you met me drunk in a dirty alleyway?"

Neman chuckled. "Somehow, I think they will understand a great deal." Neman chose a second strawberry from the bowl, coating it and his fingers in the chocolate. This time it travelled northward, vanishing between her legs. Neman pushed them wide, making Nessa gasp once again as he pushed it deep into her wet, weeping heat. He took another and added it to the first, pushing back her legs. Nessa was suddenly shocked as he bit down lightly on her clit, making her yelp. Her inner walls clenched, crushing the delicate fruit. She could feel the juices starting to seep toward her entrance, and Neman's face vanished between her thighs. Descending on her chocolate-and-strawberry coated pussy, he speared her with his tongue, lapping at the juices. Her delighted moan matched the groan that rumbled from Neman's chest as he indulged in her strawberry-chocolate center. Licking, lapping, he gorged himself, Nessa could only see the top of his head over her swollen belly.

"Hmmm, so luscious," she heard him murmur against her pussy. Vanessa's hips jerked up when he sucked her clit into his mouth, his mouth milking it until Nessa thought she would be robbed of all her sanity. Just as she was about to explode, he left her clit and delved back into her pussy again. His thumb flicked across her ultra-sensitive clit,



## **Dangerous Moonlight by Angela Castle**

---

eliciting moans from Nessa that fast turned into delighted mewls. Then everything shattered, the whole universe flying apart, her every nerve ending tingling with delight.

“Aaaah, yes, sweetness.” Neman rose above her, his tongue flicking out to lick the juice from his chin. In the next swift moment she found herself impaled on his oh-so-long, hard, thick cock, fucking her with hard, furious thrusts. All Nessa could do was hang on to the bed sheets as the world disintegrated around her, every nerve sharpened into hypersensitive bundles of pure ecstasy. Nothing existed but the pure pleasure of the man she loved more than life itself.

A low rumble started from deep within his chest. He threw back his head and roared as he climaxed hard, Nessa’s inner walls milking him of all he had. He shuddered for the longest time before falling onto the bed beside her, displacing the strawberries as they tumbled out all over the coverlet. As soon as Nessa got her breathing under control, she started to laugh. Neman raised his head, a wicked smile on his face.

Something started beeping in the background; Neman groaned, rolling to his side. “I thought you told them not to disturb us.”

Nessa propped herself up on her elbows to enjoy the view of Neman’s fine, godly ass. “I did, unless it was an emergency.” He offered her his hand to help her off the bed. Nessa awkwardly climbed off the bed, feeling sticky yet well sated, and walked into the bathroom while he answered the phone. The climate in the Bahamas was already warm and humid. Nessa didn’t need to heat the water much to wash off the last of their chocolate passion. After shutting off the shower, not bothering with a towel, she reached for a colorful sarong, wrapping it around her body. She moved through their large, open-spaced, beachfront house; light from a full moon shone down on her.

Nessa smiled, smelling Neman’s scent before feeling the heat of his body at her back as he slid two strong arms around her and pulled her

## Dangerous Moonlight by Angela Castle

---

tight against his damp naked body. He had showered as well. His hot breath puffed against her ear, sending renewed heat flushing through her, his lips tracing the shell of her ear.

"The world ending again?" Nessa asked on a soft sigh.

Neman chuckled. "Not yet. There's a slight problem with some dragons in London. The men are handling it. Plus I've threatened to cut off Mark's hands if he calls once more."

"Dragons in London?" Nessa shook her head. Even with everything she had experienced in the past month, she still had trouble believing the things she heard. "Aren't they a bit big to be flying around London without being noticed?"

"They can shift into human form just like other shifters."

"Oh," was all Nessa could manage. "The guys are playing nicely then?"

Neman's hands slid over her swollen stomach and up to cup her breasts through the soft silk of the sarong. "Apart from Mark's complaints, it seems to be going well."

Nessa twisted in his arms to glance up at her hunky husband. The moonlight cast its glow over him, giving him a beautiful gleam. His golden eyes always seemed to glow in the moonlight.

Nessa gave a moan when his large hands plumped her breasts, rolling her nipples between his thumbs. She had trouble stringing a coherent sentence together.

"Fancy a midnight moonlight swim, love?"

"Isn't it dangerous to swim in the moonlight?"

"Not when you're with me, sweetness." Neman dipped his head to

## **Dangerous Moonlight by Angela Castle**

---

nibble on her neck. Nessa melted.

“Lead the way.”

### **Author Bio**

Let's see...breaking it down into a list, I'm a: wife, mother, cook, cleaner, nappy changer, sewer of buttons and darner of socks, waitress, nurse, teacher, gardener (*well, sometimes*), handyperson, and writer of romantic books, just to name a few.

I am obsessed with the color blue, and a chocoholic (*Please feel free to send donations to the chocoholic's cause*).

I have been writing ever since I could read, and living in a fantasy world almost endlessly. I have to thank to my hubby and kids, who often knock me back to Earth and keep me grounded.

In my teenage years I discovered romance novels, then paranormal romance. I'm a sucker for the ones where the hunky hero can wield a sword, save the day, *and* get the lady.

I welcome feedback from my readers, so feel free to e-mail me at [angelacastleleros@yahoo.com](mailto:angelacastleleros@yahoo.com), or you can visit my website, <http://sites.google.com/site/angelacastlewriter/>.